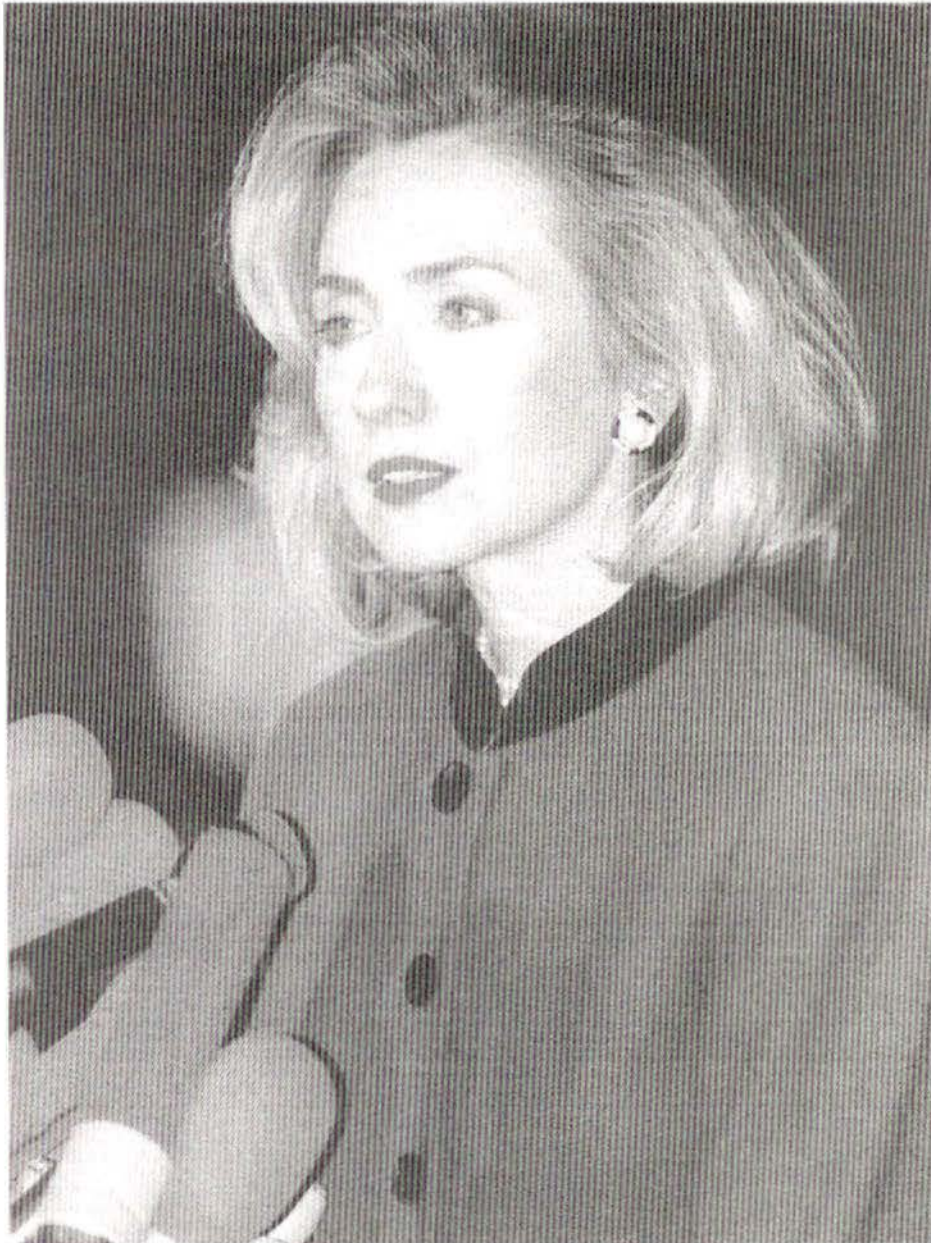


Negotiating Tradition:

The Changing Image of Hillary Rodham Clinton
and the Expanding Role of the First Lady



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:

THE ROLE OF THE FIRST LADY REVISITED

I) IN THE TRADITION OF TRADITION

There is such a concerted effort being made to make it appear that I dictate to FDR that I don't want people who should know the truth to have any misunderstanding about it. I wouldn't dream of doing more than passing along requests or suggestions that come to me.

-Eleanor Roosevelt¹

Quite contrary to her predecessor, who made a cognizant resolution to avoid the policy-making and power-yielding public arena, Hillary Rodham Clinton unequivocally expanded her role as First Lady beyond the realm of "requests" and "suggestions." In 1933, Eleanor Roosevelt affirmed her position as First Lady by ascribing to traditional expectations that barred her from participation in political decisions, or at least the public acknowledgment of such involvement. Sixty years later, in 1993, Hillary Rodham Clinton ventured to challenge tradition by accepting an overtly political appointment to chair the President's Task Force on Health Care Reform. The challenge that Clinton posed to tradition (both through her specific appointment to head the task force and her general approach to the role of the First Lady) stirred upset among a public and media committed to the rituals of tradition. The arduous struggle between honoring tradition

¹ Lash, Joseph. Eleanor and Franklin. New York, 1971. As quoted in Caroli, Betty Boyd. First Ladies. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. p. 192.

while simultaneously trying to create space for a reconceptualization of the role of the First Lady is most explicitly played out in the construction of her image.

During her husband's time in office, Clinton strives to expand the traditional role of the First Lady to incorporate policy responsibilities. Her attempts are met with resistance, as such expansion destabilizes an established traditional norm. In order to successfully broaden the role of the First Lady, Clinton must successfully negotiate a balance between traditional role fulfillment and accommodation of her own policy objectives. The determination of a successful balance requires Clinton to engage in extensive role experimentation, resulting in a constantly changing image. Clinton's changing role reveals her attempts to navigate a more substantive policy role into the capacity of the First Ladyship.

The specific question this thesis will address is how and why Hillary Rodham Clinton's image changed after the Health Care Reform Task Force's proposal failed to gain passage through Congress. The hypothesis this thesis sets out to prove is that during her husband's time in office, Clinton can only successfully make policy and expand the role of the First Lady if she subscribes to traditional expectations of a First Lady. The change in Clinton's image thus reveals a strategy of accommodation, whereby Clinton must work within the system to change the system. When Clinton fails to appease tradition, she is met with the challenge of resistance posed by cultural forces with profound attachment to tradition. To avoid destabilization and upset to tradition, Clinton must appease such attachment while simultaneously pursuing her objective of role extension.

Through her image, Clinton communicates to the public who she is, at both a personal and a political level--if the two can indeed be differentiated. During her husband's time in office, Clinton assumes the responsibility of the First Ladyship, such that her approach to the role defines the position for the time period. Thus, the importance of her image escalates from that of a private individual to that of a historical institution. Implications of projected images resonate far beyond that of Clinton's personality, per se, but of a larger institution whose symbolism reflects such pillars of American society as democracy, public service, and women's role in society. Given its historic and symbolic value, the First Ladyship is a form of institutionalized tradition. Hence, deviation from tradition in such a role is a potentially destabilizing and threatening endeavor that must be approached with the utmost candor.

Contrary to popular perception, Clinton's image did not simply change after the health care reform, but rather, her image has been in a constant state of flux as she has struggled to balance traditional expectations with her policy making capacities. Many journalists and contemporary historians have simplistically posited that throughout the 1992 campaign for the presidency and through to November of 1994, when she ceased to head the Health Care Task Force, Clinton's image presented that of a serious, goal-oriented, political professional who unapologetically acted as her husband's equal. Following the failure of the task force's proposal to pass through Congress, and the subsequent media brutalities that she endured criticizing her as an overbearing influence and non-elected policy maker, Clinton softened her image.² The "softened" image

² A prime example of this can be located in an article by James Bennet entitled "The Inauguration: The First Lady; Hillary Clinton, an Evolutionary Tale." (*New York Times*, January 20, 1997) "Scorched by the fallout after Mrs. Clinton's leadership in seeking universal health care coverage, the White House has

represented a quieter, gentler, prettier, mother who functioned as a support for her husband.

In the context of a traditional interpretation of the First Ladyship, some perceived Clinton's policy-making role as an inappropriate rendition of the First Lady's duty to serve her husband. The combination of her impressive professional background and her assertive personality lead to the perception that she was a self-interested, power-hungry aggressor who cast a dark shadow over her husband. Arguably, political strategy dictated that in order to counter such negative perceptions, depicted by the media and confirmed in opinion polls, Clinton had to "soften" her image. The countering image to the abrasive politico was a more traditional First Lady who stood silently on the sidelines supporting her husband by her presence not her words. Such accessories as lighter hair, pastel-colored suits, and a glistening smile aided the image of a "softer" First Lady who preferred Christmas tree-trimming to policy-making. This engaging, even rational, narrative of the transition to a "softer" image paints a clear picture where lines are definitively drawn between abrasive and soft images, and between the roles of supporting wife and active policy-maker, negating the possibility of overlap between the two roles.

With these distinctions in mind, I seek to account for the alleged softening of Clinton's image through concrete analysis. I will explore the construction of her image through two avenues: one through her own construction of her image, as gauged by her speeches, and the other through the media's portrayal of her, as indicated by *New York Times* coverage. Both are important to explore in so far as neither operates as the sole

labored to play down her influence, describing a conversation from policy-maker to speech-maker, helpmate and goodwill ambassador, a seemingly docile role for an accomplished lawyer with more than two decades of experience in public life and no shortage of opinions."

variable in the construction of her image. I will analyze the First Lady's speeches and media coverage in the form of four case studies, which focus on her role in the following: the inauguration (January 1993), the congressional testimony on health care (September 1993), the passage of the welfare reform bill (July 1996), and the child care conference (October 1997). I hypothesize that balancing tradition and expansion within the role of the First Lady has proved a constant source of struggle for Clinton; not something set off by one, or even a handful, of instances. Moreover, in order to expand the role of the First Lady beyond traditional expectations, the balance must cater to those very expectations. The negotiation of Clinton's role is at times condensed into a struggle between what she wants to do and what she can do. Inevitably, in order to satisfy tradition, compromises will have to be made. Clinton's challenge, thus, is to conceive a role which accommodates both her own desires to extend the role and a staunch attachment to tradition.

Clinton's experience with the health care reform effort illustrated the dangers of defying tradition in favor of her own interpretation of the role, which produced a reaction vastly underestimated. Health care reform taught Clinton the hard lesson that direct defiance of tradition would result in a failed attempt at reconceptualizing the role of the First Lady. Ultimately, Clinton learns that her professional role is met with more success if she is able to package it in the traditional First Lady format. As it is imbedded in historical and cultural tradition, the First Ladyship as an institution connotes more than the individual woman who occupies it in a given time. Upset to the First Ladyship reverberates beyond one woman to an entire institution that fuses the political and private worlds in an ordered format. The precedent set by the First Ladyship delineates between

public and private worlds, between masculine and feminine domains. Defiance of this role challenges not only the institution but a larger social system.

Given its clear relationship with tradition and symbolic order, resistance to change in the role of the First Lady incites little surprise. The success of Clinton's ambitious task hinges upon her ability to muster support from influential social agents. Namely, to pose dramatic change to institutional order, Clinton needs the media to work in conjunction with her. The media, however, often pursues alternative objectives to Clinton's in its creation of her image, by reporting her from extreme perspectives. When she embraces her policy-making role, the media paints her as a policy wonk threatening the stable and comfortable institution of the First Ladyship. When she retreats to a more traditional role, the media depicts a dramatic reclusive change in roles and juxtaposes her to herself of past. Thus, a change in image appears that much more severe when reported by the media. The difficulty Clinton has with working in the confines of the institution is both exacerbated and perpetuated by the media which casts her in extremes. The media tends to magnify any change made, regardless of how large or small, thus dramatizing any alteration of role balance. For a successful reconceptualization of the First Ladyship, Clinton must not only appease tradition, but also the media, for her image in large part depends on it.

Through an examination of Clinton's self-projected and media-constructed image, I will gauge the change in her image over time. Moreover, I will argue that this image change functions to achieve particular ends. Through a type of trial and error process, Clinton learns that the most efficient means of realizing her professional and policy goals is contingent on her ability to fulfill the traditional obligations of a First Lady. For

Clinton to be accepted as a policy maker, the realm of acceptable First Lady involvements must be expanded beyond the ceremonial and the symbolic. Essentially, the burden that Clinton faces is to navigate a non-political role into the public, political domain. During her husband's time in office, Clinton can only productively contribute to policy and expand the role of the First Lady if she subscribes to traditional expectations of a First Lady.

II) METHODOLOGY: THE SELF PRESENTED AND PORTRAYED

The health care task force serves as an ideal point of comparison because it marks the most dramatic break with tradition ever exercised by a First Lady. Though undeniably controversial, the First Lady's appointment to head a presidential task force was legal. The Anti-Nepotism Act (U.S.C. 3110) statutorily bars any public official from appointing or employing a relative "in the agency in which he is serving or over which he exercises jurisdiction or control." Given that her position was unpaid and the task force's finding were strictly advisory, Clinton's position remained within legal confines, though the issue was hotly disputed.³ The First Lady's appointment to head a presidential task force chartered new territory for a role traditionally divorced from policy-making, or even influencing.

I have chosen four case studies through which I will extrapolate a broader understanding of the patterns and strategies used in the construction of the First Lady's image. The inauguration will provide a starting point from which to gauge Clinton's

³ Multiple law suits sought to challenge the First Lady's position as head of the task force. (Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, Inc. et al v. Hillary Rodham Clinton, et al., Civil Action No. 93-0399, 93-5086, and 93-5092.)

initial adaptation to the role. Fresh from the campaign trail, the inauguration sets the tone for the presidential term. The congressional testimony of the health care proposal, as stated above, marked an unabashed monumental departure from tradition. In addition, the testimony presents a useful juncture in so far as Clinton was exceptionally vocal (as she presented the proposal) and visible (as the media carefully monitored the historical occurrence). Clinton's reaction to her husband's welfare reform bill provides an interesting point of contrast to her earlier position as vocal policy-shaper. Finally, the recent child care conference ensures that the examination is as current as possible, enabling more concise future projections.

With the balance between traditional expectations of the role of the First Lady and a reconceptualization of that role to include policy-making as the lens for investigation, I will analyze Clinton's speeches and *New York Times* coverage of her. How Clinton achieves, or strives to achieve, this balance throughout her husband's time in office is imperative to her success both as a First Lady and as a policy-maker. Given her position as First Lady, and the historically- and culturally-determined expectations that accompany it, Clinton cannot function simply as a policy-maker or expert. The weighty symbolism of her role negates the possibility for Clinton to be judged exclusively on her policy-making or professional abilities. Inevitably, when Clinton speaks on behalf of an issue or particular policy she does so as the First Lady, not solely as a professional expert or policy-maker.

Indeed, in order to maintain the respect of the institution, and of herself as the embodiment of that institution, Clinton must always, to some degree, subscribe to existing expectations of what a First Lady should be. Likewise, in order to maintain

legitimacy as a policy-maker and a professional (both a lawyer and a family issues advocate), Clinton must, to some degree, stray from the traditional mold of the First Lady which, by definition, excludes policy-making or influencing. How she negotiates this balance determines her success in fulfilling both of her roles. Moreover, how the media portrays her role interpretation is central to the public's perception of Clinton. The correlation between Clinton's self-presentation and the media's portrayal determines Clinton's image, and in many ways determines her success in her role fulfillment.

I) SPEECHES

One of the most important activities of the First Lady is to deliver speeches with poignant messages, calling attention to specific issues. Speeches are the way that the public gets to know its First Lady and her concerns. For a political figure, speeches provide a feasible venue for establishing relations with the public. "Communication in this sense is not simply the transfer of information from one person to another but a unifying process of commitment to the values and beliefs presented by the communicator."⁴ As speeches create a relationship, rhetorical style becomes the personality trait upon which audiences determine their like or dislike for the deliverer. Certainly, the way a speech is delivered and the physical appearance of the deliverer plays an important role in the formation of a whole image. Unfortunately, for obvious logistical reasons, my analysis will have to be limited to the written text. Rhetorical style becomes a tool used to convey one's identity and purpose. "Modern notions of rhetorical style acknowledge that this element can serve an important function in shaping the rhetor,

⁴ Erickson, Paul. Reagan Speaks. New York: New York University Press, 1985. p. xiii.

creating his or her image."⁵ Rhetorical style is interpreted as essential to creating one's self-presentation or image. Style becomes all that much more salient in the context of a public figure who has little to no intimate contact with her audience.

Paying particular attention to the different images Clinton puts forth, I will analyze the full text of speeches she delivered in regards to the four case studies. I will collect the speeches from Clinton's own office, to insure an independent measure, unaffected by media interpretation. Through her speeches, Clinton faces the challenge of balancing historical and cultural expectations of the role of the First Lady with professional requirements of a successful policy-maker. How she presents herself through her speeches is indicative of how she approaches this balance in her interpretation of the First Lady's role. The pre-crafted nature of Clinton's prepared speeches implies a calculated presentation, one that represents Clinton's self-presentation in its ideal form. Thus, how Clinton positions herself in her speeches suggests how she hopes to be perceived.

I will look to identify the interplay between Clinton's role as policy-maker/political player on the one hand and traditional First Lady as wife, mother, caregiver on the other. According to Sullivan and Turner, in their essay "Power and Politics: Case Study of Hillary Rodham Clinton," two different rhetorical styles represent the two facets of Clinton. Authoritative rhetoric suggests a right-thinking individual well within the norms of public discourse. This traditionally political speaking style is objective, distanced, anonymous and relies heavily on facts, statistics, cost analysis and expert

⁵ Muir, Janette and Benitez, Lisa. "Redefining the Role of the First Lady: The Rhetorical Style of Hillary Rodham Clinton." in Denton, Robert and Holloway, Rachel eds. The Clinton Presidency. Westport: Praeger, 1996. p.154.

opinion. On the other end of the spectrum, the stereotypical female rhetoric, representative of a traditional First Lady, speaks from a moral, personal point of view which clearly values emotion and empathy.⁶

Sullivan and Turner's examination of Clinton's rhetorical style, in the binary categories of authoritative and feminine, is certainly interesting and in large measure useful, however, in terms of a comprehensive examination it proves too simplistic. I will argue that Clinton constantly exercises both rhetorical styles, for indeed her interpretation of the First Lady's role incorporates both authority and emotion. I will look to identify how Clinton positions herself, both as the speaker at a particular time, and as a policy-maker and government representative, and the strategy by she employs to argue her case.

How Clinton establishes herself as a speech-maker speaks directly to a calculated attempt at political positioning. Establishing herself as a supportive wife, a professional lawyer and advocate, or as an active policy-formulator sets the standard to which her audience will hold her. Clinton casts herself in various roles during different speeches to accommodate different times, topics, target audiences, and objectives pursued. For example, Clinton can invoke expectations of a traditional First Lady by establishing herself first and foremost as a family member, a supportive wife, and loving mother. Reference to her position within a family emphasizes the personal and emotional role of the First Lady.

Equally important in determining how Clinton's self-positioning balances her multi-faceted role is how, if at all, Clinton establishes her credentials as an expert or as a professional. Citing her credentials as an expert by referring to professional

⁶ Sullivan, Patricia and Turner, Lynn. "Power and Politics: Case Study of Hillary Rodham Clinton." In

accomplishments, or by sharing personal experiences, or by providing no credentials and speaking as "one of you" all guide the audience toward a particular interpretation of her. Similarly, whether she overtly establishes herself as a policy-maker or she more subtly alludes to a policy-influencing position, creates a context in which the audience can interpret her. Through her speeches, Clinton relays to her audience where she stands in relation to policy and power. Rhetorical devices easily enable her to distance herself from the powers of the presidency or to adopt them, stimulating an aura of importance around her efforts. Quite simply, how she refers to the policy actor, as an inclusive "we" or as a distanced "the president," unambiguously establishes how she intends the audience to view her as either a more traditional or a more policy-active First Lady.

Clinton's strategy for presenting and supporting ideas reflects her interpretation of the role. A reliance on facts and numbers to support her claims, enables Clinton to communicate to her audience her position as an unabashed expert, one who by nature of her demonstrated expertise, knows what is "right" and what will work. This professional, yet distanced approach, signals a clear policy-maker professional. Alternate approaches construe Clinton as the storyteller, retelling the shared experiences of others, or as the everyday woman disclosing her own personal experiences. Clinton often relies the stories of people's experiences shared with her through her various travels and discussion opportunities. As she travels around the country, Clinton's repeatedly invoked references to others' experiences serves as a tool for unification across state and local boundaries. Fostering a feeling of shared personal experience, Clinton functions as a community uniter. Clinton is able to universalize personal experience by listening to it then sharing it

in a manner that many more can relate to. An additional approach to presenting and supporting her ideas involves Clinton's sharing of her own personal experience. The revelation of the personal connects Clinton with her audience in a more intimate exchange and appeals to emotional sensibility. Disclosure of personal experience enables Clinton to relate to her audience as "one of them" as opposed to an imposing government official or didactic policy expert.

Finally, an analysis of Clinton's speech-making can only be complete with an examination of what is not spoken, for it bears as much importance as what is. At times Clinton's vocal absence reveals more of her interpretation of her role as First Lady and her strategy for approaching it than when she is vocal. As a public and vocal figure, Clinton's silence can make strong statements. In certain instances, Clinton's silence or absence incites more intrigue and interpretation than her speeches themselves. Thus, her noted absence from particular issues or events cannot be ignored, but rather should be explored as a source of potential insight to her position as First Lady. Clinton's speaking strategies, inclusive of the strategy of silence, serve as indicators to gauge how Clinton balances the traditional role of the First Lady with her reconceptualization of the role which incorporates policy-influencing into the job description.

II) THE MEDIA

Clinton's self-presentation alone, however, cannot entirely account for the construction of her image. The media is essential to politicians, particularly those of national standing, because it is the only way that the majority of voters will get to know them. When such a vast distance exists between a politician and the constituency, mass media provides a principal vehicle through which they can influence public opinion. In

their examination of the relationship between the press and the president, Michael Grossman and Martha Kumar note that, "A president needs news organizations because, as a communicator of most of his political messages, they determine his credibility with major public officials and the leaders of the most powerful interest groups."⁷ By extension, the same is true for the First Lady. The majority of the American public does not learn about, or formulate their opinions on, Clinton through her speeches. Indeed, only a small percent of the population actually hears Clinton speak. By and large, people learn about and judge Clinton through how the media portrays her. By definition, her image is not necessarily a replica of who Clinton is, but rather how she is viewed. No amount of political strategizing or crafty speech-making can wholly counter the grand power of image influence, if not determination, that the media yields. Thus, an examination of media portrayal is imperative for a comprehensive study of Clinton's image. How the media interprets Clinton's balance of the traditional with the politically professional aspects of her role elucidates both the success that Clinton has in achieving a balance and how American culture responds to such a balance.

Though clearly a power-wielding entity, the media does not exercise its power to inform the public of news-worthy issues from an unbiased perspective. Often the media has a tendency to report what is engaging at face value and easily digestible by a consuming readership. Existing analysis of political media coverage documents the media's tendency to report more sensational situations at the expense of substantive issues. Walter Lippmann began the discussion of the role the news served in 1921 with his proclamation: "If you study the [news]...you will find, very often, that the issues are

⁷ Grossman, Michael and Kumar, Martha. Portraying the President. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins

rarely in the headlines, barely in the leading paragraphs, and sometimes not even mentioned anywhere."⁸ According to Lippmann, the news deems singular, tangible events and not their underlying causes newsworthy. The "indisputable fact and the easy interest" replace more complicated issues behind such facts.⁹ The news reports facts, in part, because the medium itself and the attention span of the readership denies the possibility of expansive theorizing. In a more contemporary extension of Lippmann's assertion, W. Lance Bennet, explains that the news is "a consumer good" that must be packaged and sold to the public. James Fallows confirms this perception with his interpretation of the media as a business. He asserts that the production of bias coverage is a result not of partisan preference, but "It reflects instead the instincts, pressure, and incentives of the modern news business."¹⁰ The media, like any other successful salesperson, knows what will make its product sell. According to Bennet, this results in significant "information biases" in the news.¹¹ Such biases result in coverage that often sacrifices that which would contribute to a well-informed public body, in favor of that which creates a well-entertained audience.

Thus, a comprehensive analysis of coverage of Clinton rests upon a contextual understanding and testing of the media. For example, coverage of Clinton's congressional health care testimony can test Patterson's assertion that media reports single events over more complicated issues because: "Policy issues are rooted in social

University Press, 1981. p. 4.

⁸ Lippmann, Walter. Public Opinion. New York: MacMillian Company, 1921. P. 221.

⁹ Ibid. P. 349.

¹⁰ Fallows, James. Breaking the News. New York: Vintage Books, 1996. P. 51.

¹¹ Bennet, W. Lance. News: The Politics of Illusion. New York: Longman Inc., 1988. P. 26.

conditions, which are harder to enliven than events.”¹² If examined coverage confirms Patterson’s theory, then perhaps such confirmation is more indicative of the media itself, rather than its position on Clinton specifically. An understanding of media reporting tendencies is imperative to a complete analysis of the media’s portrayal of Clinton.

I will examine the media’s portrayal of the First Lady through the *New York Times*. Certainly, limiting my evaluation of the media to the *New York Times* excludes many other important and plentiful media sources. With a subject as visible and as active as Clinton, I must substantially narrow my scope to insure my ability to realize the project. As a reputable, substantive, and widely-read news source, *The New York Times* is a reasonable indicator of news in general. It is also more likely to present news pieces of quality rather than sensational gossip pieces. Stories are thus of general interest, geared toward a public of high education and intelligence level, and provide useful, in-depth information on a variety of issues.¹³ In addition, *The New York Times* is widely read on a daily basis across the country and has achieved great credibility as a respected journalistic publication.

Thus, *The New York Times* should be one of the least likely mass-distributed news sources to trivialize political issues and Clinton’s position as a policy maker by displacing them with more frivolous concerns over her hair styles or cookie recipes. I will address the portrayal of the First Lady not only through what is reported (substantive policy or suit color choice) but how it is presented (the tone and type of article) and how often. I am more interested in Clinton’s role as a policy maker and trailblazer for the First

¹² Patterson, Thomas E. *Out of Order*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. P. 62.

¹³ “Distinguishing Scholarly Journals From Other Periodicals,”

<http://www.library.cornell...ref/research/skill20.html>.

Ladyship than I am in Clinton as a popular cite for sensational gossip, thus *The New York Time* best serves my purpose.

The search will be limited to a one-month time frame of the given event to insure that the coverage is contemporary, and not projective or in retrospect. In the case of Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform bill, however, I extended the time period of coverage to two months because Clinton did not occupy a formal role in the reform efforts and thus coverage of her reaction was limited. From the total pool of articles that mention Clinton's name I will omit ones that are not substantial articles. These include news briefs with less than 100 words apiece, letters to the editor, published corrections.

The number of articles that mention Clinton in the time period around a given event will provide a fair indicator as to the level of media (and by extension public) concern and interest in Clinton's involvement at the time of the event. Comparing the number of articles between case studies will create a context in which to gauge relative importance. I will also divide the articles into two groups: those which focus on Clinton and the other which simply make mention of her. Articles "focusing" on Clinton center on her as the primary subject and usually feature her by name or position in the title. Articles "mention" Clinton if her name appeared two or less times in the article. In all instances, the brief mention of her serves a tangential purpose to the article itself, and is not as indicative of Clinton's coverage as those articles that focus on her. After examining the base of articles that mention Clinton during the given time frame, I will focus my analysis more precisely on the articles that report Clinton's involvement with the given event. Any mention of Clinton in an article focusing on the event or any

mention of the event in an article focusing on Clinton will be subject to in depth examination through individual article analysis.

In theory, the media relays to the people events and issues of importance. Due to logistical issues of space and readership attention span, not everything can be reported. Thus, what the media chooses to report is a significant indicator of what the public knows about and is interested in. Which of Clinton's various roles the media chooses to report plays a large role in determining the balance her image projects between traditional and policy-making. Indeed, the balance that the media creates between portraying Clinton's role as a more traditional First Lady, fulfilling ceremonial duties, and as a professional advocate, contributing to policy formulation, has the potential to foster an image entirely different than the one that Clinton herself tries to project.

In addition to reporting the activities she participates in, the media also pays close attention to Clinton's appearance, especially the clothing she wears. In media reports, clothing features as a central element of both Clinton the traditional First Lady and Clinton the policy-maker. This fascination speaks to the expectations associated with a First Lady, who for many years has been a largely ornamental figure aside her husband. The focus that the media places on ornamentation affects Clinton's image, as it establishes a precedent with which to view her and creates a distraction from other perhaps more substantive issues. In reporting what Clinton is doing, the media also assesses the power that she yields relative to the president. Inherent in an examination of what she does is an assessment of what type of power she exercises: inconsequential, influential, or absolute. What role she plays, what she looks like, and what power she yields are important areas of media reporting that directly contribute to the formation of her image as First Lady.

The degree to which Clinton deviates from the traditional role of First Lady can be explored through the media's drawn comparisons between Clinton and her predecessors. The way that the media interprets Clinton's activities, as a natural extension of her role as First Lady or as a noted divergence from existing expectations, is important to understanding her image. The presentation of Clinton as a novelty First Lady or as a pioneer stresses the existing rift between traditional duties and Clinton's own inclusion of professional policy-making and influencing. Supplementing comparisons with past precedents, Clinton is also compared to her own past activities, holding her to an entirely different set of standards, ones that she may or may not have intentionally set. The difficulty of interpreting Clinton as a new type of First Lady is the lack of existing tools to evaluate her with. Reverting back to assessments of past First Ladies provides an inadequate framework in application to Clinton. The only reliable standard to hold her to is her own past, which highlights her personal development and change, continuously reminding the readership of the Hillary of past. Reports of changes in her activities or concerns relate directly to the media's attempt to uncover why Clinton does what she does, and speculating on strategic positioning.

Much like in speeches, what is not reported in the media can prove equally revealing as what is reported. Inevitably, the media makes decisions as to what constitutes a news-worthy piece and what does not. Thus, issues that are simply ignored are those deemed unimportant or uninteresting. The aspects of Clinton that the media chooses to overlook bear carry equal leverage in influencing her image as those which are prominently featured. An article around the time of the congressional testimony, for example, which features what Clinton wears and makes no mention of her policy

proposals impacts both the way she is viewed as a First Lady and the way she is received as a policy maker.

In and of themselves, speeches and media provide essential insight to the construction on Clinton's image. Observed changes over time and constants over time, for both media and speeches, will lend itself to more broad-reaching conclusions about Clinton's image. Further, the interplay between Clinton's speeches and media reports will provide an interesting forum to observe how successfully Clinton controls her own image, and how successfully the media remains within the confines of an unbiased observer reporting facts. The interplay between the two venues of speeches and media can reveal who sets the agenda, and where the power in image construction lies. Does the media respond to Clinton's agenda or does Clinton react to media portrayals? The relationship between the two reveals an interesting juncture between what Clinton has the agency to influence and what extends beyond the boundary of her realm of influence.

III) HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK: TRADITION INSTITUTIONALIZED

I will examine Hillary Rodham Clinton's image before and after the health care reform within a broader theoretical framework in which she problematizes the traditional role of the First Lady. Such an examination, however, rests upon an understanding of a basic historical context of women's position in public life, inclusive of that of the First Lady. Traditionally, men have exclusively occupied positions in the public realm, while women have maintained the private sphere. The western foundation for this philosophical development can be traced back to Aristotle who asserted that woman was

"naturally" unfit for the highest good, service in public life. Relegated to the sphere of reproduction and private life, women played no role in public life.

Closer to contemporary time, the industrial revolution solidified the positioning of men in the public work space and women in the private domestic sphere. As women's value in the paid labor force diminished, "the association of women with the private sphere and of men with the public had hardened into a truism and an ideology."¹⁴ Such historical precedent has led to the contemporary dichotomy between public and private domains. Although women have increasingly penetrated the traditionally male domain of the public sphere, tensions between the public and private have persevered.

This tension is most lucidly illustrated through the role of the First Lady. As the wife of a man holding public office, the First Lady symbolically embodies the supportive traditional role of woman as wife, mother, homemaker. The most important responsibility of the First Lady is to reflect positively on her husband, confirming his status as a strong, yet loving man. The First Lady serves as a constant reminder that while the President is leader of the nation he is also the leader of his own family, thus upholding the paternalistic values of the nuclear family. Though her duties are uncodified, a clear historical precedent defines the appropriate role for the First Lady as her husband's escort, hostess for social events, and within the past decades, a champion for charitable causes.

When a First Lady ventures into the unnavigated public domain, she invariably faces public outcry. Abigail Adams' outspoken political opinions and unofficial advisory role, via lengthy correspondences with her husband, earned her the contemptuous title

Mrs. President.¹⁵ Eleanor Roosevelt repeatedly denied over-stepping her private boundaries. Rosalynn Carter caused such upset by sitting in and observing cabinet meetings that she had to stop attending and hear reports after the fact. Edith Mayo has argued that First Ladies have always wielded some degree of political influence and what has set Clinton apart from the rest is her candor about the fact. Many First Ladies, including Edith Wilson, Florence Harding, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Nancy Reagan, utilized their advantageous proximity to the President to influence policy, never however in an official role.¹⁶ Unlike any of her predecessors, Clinton grew up in a time where women's roles in society were not limited to the domestic front. Clinton graduated from college in 1969, on the eve of the second wave of feminism. The opportunities available to her, both professional and personal, provided a greater spectrum of choices than any of her foremothers encountered. Thus it is not surprising to find the first First Lady from her generation deviating from the previously respected norm.

Historically the First Lady has embodied the ideal of American womanhood unequivocally establishing her position as wife paramount.¹⁷ As American women have moved their work outside of the homeplace, choosing to become a dominant and integral element of the working and professional population, the First Lady remained in the White House symbolizing the traditional ideal more than the present reality. Hillary Rodham Clinton, however, reconceptualized the role of the First Lady by adding overt intellectual and political influence to the pallet of First Lady duties. Removing the First

¹⁴ Eisenstein, Hester. Contemporary Feminist Thought. Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1983, p. 20.

¹⁵ Mayo, Edith. "The Influence and Power of First Ladies." *Chronicle of Higher Education*. September 15, 1993.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Caroli, Betty Boyd. First Ladies. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Lady from the safe confines of the White House social coordinator inevitably brought to the surface new and challenging issues to the foreground.

The most prominent of these issues pertains to what Clinton has referred to as the "inevitable double bind" of the First Lady, which categorizes the virtually impossible challenge of achieving a balance between doing enough (political, intellectual, social activity) without overshadowing the President, and between having opinions but not overbearing ones.¹⁸ The potential threat that both a career and intelligence poses to traditional notions of femininity, motherhood, and the role of a wife are amplified considerably when exhibited by a First Lady. By its very nature, the role of the First Lady presupposes that the woman put her husband's career above all else; her purpose in a sense becomes to reflect positively on her husband. The dangers of a professionally ambitious and outspoken wife are that she may overshadow her husband or weaken his authoritative status. For the most part, particularly within the political arena, Americans have framed husband and wife as complimentary parts of a whole unit. Subsequently, "[w]ith marriage as a zero-sum game, if one spouse was strong the other must be weak."¹⁹

From the 1992 election campaign through the first term of her husband's administration, critics subtly and overtly criticized Clinton for her professionalism, her ambition, and her intelligence insinuating that they somehow denigrated her husband. In 1992, Richard Nixon commented in regards to Hillary Rodham Clinton that, "If the wife comes through as being too strong and too intelligent it makes the husband look like a

¹⁸ Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. Beyond the Double Bind. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. p. 20.

¹⁹ *ibid.* p. 35.

wimp."²⁰ Beginning with the 1992 campaign and continuing throughout the administration the Clintons' marriage constituted a point of great controversy. That they proclaimed an equal partnership proved particularly disturbing to some. Maureen Dowd quoted Republican consultant Roger Stone as saying, "There's a familiar order of things, and the notion of a coequal couple in the White House is a little offensive to men and women."²¹ Stone's concern with the Clintons' threat to the "familiar order of things" demonstrates a resistance to change from traditional notions of gender and marital roles, most probably under the assumption that this proposed upset could potentially damage the stability of the presidency, or worse yet suggest that the country should follow suit.

IV) LITERATURE REVIEW: THE INCOMPLETE IMAGE

Academic exploration of Hillary Rodham Clinton's role as First Lady has primarily focused on her deviation from established tradition and her consequential subjection to scrutiny. How she has handled herself, particularly under duress from extreme media portrayals of her, has proven to be a illustrative cite for investigations of women's (namely wives' and mothers') role in visible power positions in the 1990s. Literature, for the most part, is limited to Clinton's controversial role in the 1992 presidential campaign. Perhaps due to the immediacy of events, little to no work has focused on Clinton's evolving role in her husband's administration. Nor have many writers, except perchance in passing, sought to explain why Clinton has acted the way she has and why she generates the response she does.

²⁰ Gardetto, Darlaine. "Hillary Rodham Clinton, Symbolic Gender Politics, and the *New York Times*: January-November 1992." *Political Communication*. V. 14, 1997.

In her essay, "The Hillary Factor," Barbara Pickering offers one of the few comprehensive explanations for Clinton's various troubles with public and media opinion. That Clinton has publicly ignored the public/private divide is the proposed root of her difficulties. Pickering argues that in blurring the distinction between the public and private spheres of influence, Clinton has upset a large segment of the American public which believes that the role of the First Lady should remain within the private domain. Thus, by challenging the traditional role, Clinton has become the target of extensive criticism. Pickering further argues that such challenges to tradition will evolve in a continuum, as new generations (of which Clinton is part of the vanguard) fill the position.²² Pickering's analysis provides a useful theoretical backdrop for an exploration of the connection between the First Ladyship and tradition, however, it stops short of explaining why this is the case or providing means for successfully functioning within such a rigid divide.

A similar examination of culturally imposed limits upon a non-traditional woman is explored in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's essay, "Shadowboxing with Stereotypes: The Press, the Public and the Candidates' Wives."²³ Investigating the wives of 1992 presidential nominees, Campbell posits that political wives are held to ridged gender stereotypes by virtue of their position as spouse. In the case of Clinton, her defiance of the traditional housewife stereotype mobilized severe upset among particular segments of

²¹ Dowd, Maureen. "Hillary Clinton as aspiring first lady: Role model or 'hall monitor' type?" *New York Times*, May 18, 1992. A15

²² Pickering, Barbara. "The Hillary Factor: A First Lady Challenges the Distinction Between Public and Private Spheres." in McKerrow, Raymie, ed. *Argument and the Postmodern Challenge*. Utah: University of Utah Speech Communication Association, 1993.

²³ Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs. "Shadowboxing with Stereotypes: The Press, the Public and the Candidates' Wives." Cambridge: Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government, 1993.

the population, particularly of both the far religious and far Republican right. Such reaction attempted to demonize Clinton while simultaneously equating her with the Democratic party. While Campbell's analysis is certainly sound, she overlooks the more subtle manifestations of cultural attachment to stereotypes and tradition.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, in *Beyond the Double Bind*, explores a tangential view of Clinton through the framework of what Clinton herself has referred to as the "inevitable double bind." Jamieson asserts that Clinton's experiences, "...are an ongoing demonstration of the power of cultural binds that enjoin women in general, and of the ways in which women continue to surmount or maneuver around them."²⁴ Thus, the difficult balance of public and private lives and the challenge that they pose to tradition is not an experience unique to the First Lady. Her double bind is, however, more acute, for as a national symbol of the ideal American wife, the First Ladyship carries the burden of tradition and a nostalgia for a simpler past time. Through an examination of Clinton's self-positioning (via her speeches and her handling of media scrutiny) during the 1992 campaign, Jamieson concludes that Clinton does successfully transcend the double bind that constrains women. "She had transcended the narrow range of attributes traditionally assumed to constrain a woman speaking in public –the ancient restraints of silence or shame."²⁵ Jamieson's conclusion, however, fails to take into account the backlash with which Clinton "established her competence without sacrificing her femininity."²⁶ Public, and certainly media, sentiment reverberated strong negative reaction to Clinton's alleged transcendence. Thus the success to which Jamieson refers must be contextualized within

²⁴ Jamieson. P.52.

²⁵ Ibid. P. 47.

²⁶ Ibid. P. 47.

a framework of liberal feminist thinking, not necessarily a viewpoint indicative of Clinton's constituency or the population at large.

Another body of work focusing on Clinton provides an in depth analysis of her rhetorical style and strategy. In their book, *From the Margins to the Center: Contemporary Women and Political Communication*, Patricia Sullivan and Lynn Turner offer a case study of Clinton's rhetoric in her congressional testimony on health care reform. They explore her rhetorical choice between strategies of confrontation and accommodation to illustrate implicit boundaries confronting women who enter the public sphere. Adopting a centrist position, Sullivan and Turner assert that Clinton challenges some restrictions while reaffirming others. Contrary to Jamieson's declaration of Clinton's success in surmounting boundaries, Sullivan and Turner conclude that Clinton creates an illusion of such success by her interplay of confrontation and accommodation. Clinton's combination of accommodation and confrontation "provides a model of illusory change. Some boundaries are moved, but the lenses that perpetuate sexual inequality remain in place."²⁷ Focusing more on how Clinton achieves this interplay, Sullivan and Turner fail to explain why Clinton adopts the strategy that she does and the reaction she solicits.

In their essay, "Redefining the Role of the First Lady: The Rhetorical Style of Hillary Rodham Clinton," Janette Kenner Muir and Lisa Benitez provide an alternate interpretation of Clinton's rhetorical style. They approach Clinton's rhetorical style as a strategy utilized to help her realize her visions of policy and ideology. Referring at random to speeches delivered throughout the first term of the Clinton presidency, Muir

and Benitez group Clinton's style into five categories: the average person, the storyteller, the lawyer, the good Methodist, and the first woman. They explore these categories within a context of Clinton as diverging from her predecessors and as a catalyst creating turmoil in a time of change. Ultimately, the categories elucidate "the dialectical tensions between the rational/discursive style in which she operates and her more spiritual, family-oriented rhetorical style."²⁸ After exploring Clinton's personal approach to the role of the First Lady, Muir and Benitez conclude that the combination of Clinton's personal experience and the historical, political context of the time create a difficult, if not irresolvable, situation. "Given her experience level, if she comes across as too polished and prepared she is viewed as arrogant and insincere. If, on the other hand, she exposes her more spiritual side she is seen as deceitful, and her motives are called into question." Muir and Benitez definitively affirm the reality of double bind, casting Clinton as a figure trapped within it, completely subject to its cultural powers.

Existing analysis of Clinton provides various useful lenses for examining Clinton's interpretation of the First Ladyship. None, however, evaluate Clinton's changing strategy, inclusive of its successes and failures, in part because none take into account the powerful influence that the media yields over her success.

The window through which I will interpret the notion of the double bind and the binaries of public/private and traditional/reinvisaged as they pertain to Hillary Rodham Clinton is the construction of her image. Thus far, I have interpreted image as the tool by which Clinton conveys herself and the institution she represents. Existing academic explorations of political images, however, provide a more in-depth context. In *The*

²⁷ Sullivan and Turner. P. 70.

Politics of Pictures, John Hartley threads together culture and politics through the nexus of images, which provide the socially pervasive components of everyday life often lacking in straightforward politics.²⁹ Kiku Adatto's *Picture Perfect* locates the impact of image in their ability to offer a direct access to reality, an appearance of the real.³⁰ This rings particularly true in a national political figure whose only avenue for presenting herself to the vast majority of people is through her image. For Clinton, her image is essential to the creation and maintenance of her political personhood. It is indeed through her image that Clinton navigates the First Ladyship across the bridge to the twenty-first century.

²⁸ Muir and Benitez. P. 155.

²⁹ Hartley, John. *The Politics of Pictures*. London: Routledge, 1992.

³⁰ Adatto, Kiku. *Picture Perfect*. New York: Basic Books, 1993.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INAUGURATION: TRADITION ATTEMPTED

I) CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

"[T]he practice of calling the President's wife the 'First Lady' was always a disagreeable one to me. I think that if some clever person would start a little crusade against it in the newspapers it could be ridiculed to death. My journal for January 20th contains quite an account of the impressive funeral ceremonies for Admiral Dewey, concluding: 'After this W. and I went to the study where I read his peace note aloud to him while he copied it on this typewriter.' Two days later, at 12:45 I was in my place in the gallery of the Senate to hear my husband read his peace message. That night I wrote: 'It is so just and conclusive that more and more I feel that he is inspired and that he must attain all he is striving for, for the good of the world.'"

-Edith Bolling Wilson³¹

In 1917, around the time of President Wilson's second inauguration, Edith Bolling Wilson set a precedent for a First Lady's approach to her husband's inauguration that would be followed, seventy-six years later, in 1993, by Hillary Rodham Clinton. Despite the fact that Wilson was not the most avid supporter of the traditional institution of the First Ladyship, demonstrated by her disregard for the name itself, she respected its requirements and its limitations. She could invite the media to critique the institution, while abstaining from such endeavors herself. Similarly, Wilson contributed to the formation of her husband's important speech, in a very private and limited manner.

³¹ Wilson, Edith Bolling. My Memoir. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1938. P. 127.

Finally, during the delivery of a major speech, squeezed between her husband's re-election victory and his inauguration ceremony, Wilson assumed her "place" beside her husband, offering silent support. Wilson's role, as she interprets it, is to support her husband, not only for the delivery of this particular speech but for all of the goals he pursues. With great faith in the benevolence that her husband's contributions will incite, Wilson dutifully assumes the role most conducive to her husband's success: that of the silently supportive First Lady. Answering to a disagreeable title is a small sacrifice made in order to further her husband's cause.

For her husband's 1993 inauguration, Clinton adopted a similar approach in which prioritizing her husband's success entailed fulfilling a traditionally supportive role. Clinton remained completely silent through her husband's inauguration. She accompanied him to all of the various inaugural events and supported him on the sidelines, never stepping on to the stage herself. Such a supportive role was not necessarily Clinton's preferred position, as she exhibited throughout the 1992 campaign. Her preference, however, was suspended in favor of a more symbolic role that supported her husband in the traditional format. Thus, even when the formalities of an institution are not ideal, they must be complied with in order to achieve desired objectives.

Unlike Wilson, whose decision to abide by traditional norms went unquestioned, because it was entirely expected, Clinton's assumption of the same traditional role proved far more problematic. Clinton's unprecedented active involvement in her husband's campaign suggested that her sudden adoption of the traditional role was not necessarily consistent with, or indicative of, her character. That Clinton played the role of the supportive First Lady on the sidelines for the inauguration could not insure that she would

simply be accepted as such. Indeed, such a drastic change in her role produced a confused identity, one which neither the media nor Clinton herself knew quite how to handle.

As a ceremonial event, inaugurations serve largely symbolic purposes. Arthur Schlesinger provides a synopsis of the inaugural address, which creates the opportunity when, "...the nation listens for a moment as one people to the words of the man they have chosen for the highest office in the land." Yet he quickly qualifies his statement with the disclaimer that the address "...is rarely an occasion for original thought or stimulating reflection."³² The inaugural address is a rhetorical exercise that, for the most part, avoids expected or grandiose statements. Its purpose, however, is not without significance. The inauguration is a ritual of transition, where power is formally transferred to a new leader, enabling the brief opportunity for the new president to affirm the choice of the people by proving himself a worthy leader. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson define four objectives of the inaugural rhetoric:

The presidential inaugural (1) unifies the audience by reconstituting its members as the people, who can witness and ratify the ceremony; (2) rehearses communal values drawn from the past; (3) sets forth the political principles that will govern the new administration; and (4) demonstrates through enactment that the president appreciates the requirements and limitations of executive functions.³³

While the inauguration address can play an agenda setting, it is almost exclusively symbolic, uniting the citizenry through a shared past while looking ahead to the future with the guaranteed stability of tradition. By this definition, for the inaugural address, the honoring of tradition is of paramount importance.

³² Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur., ed. The Chief Executive: Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington to Lyndon B. Johnson. New York: Crown Publishers, 1965. P. vi-vii.

During the inaugural address, the President must honor and reaffirm traditional values while looking forward to the future term. A demonstrated understanding and respect for the past attests to a Presidents' comprehension of the loftiness of his position, inclusive of the need to maintain the position as such. While individual presidents come and go with each term, the institution of the presidency remains intact, providing stability for the country and upholding a connection with the past. According to Campbell and Jamieson, "In order to be invested, presidents must demonstrate their qualifications for office by venerating the past and showing that the traditions of the institution continue unbroken in them."³⁴ A president must maximize his time in office, yet he also has a higher duty to insure that the institution is left untarnished for his successor. As a ceremonial rite, an inauguration upholds both the presidential institution and the traditions that maintain it. The acknowledgment of the "limitations of executive functions" respects that the institution is larger than the individual who occupies it.

The inauguration is in many ways a celebration and a reaffirmation of the institution and the tradition of the presidency. "Inaugurals outline a relationship between the American people and the American government, celebrate the peaceful transition of government, and reaffirm faith in that government."³⁵ Thus, inaugurals bring together the people and their government during a period of transition. But beyond the larger institution, the inauguration serves to affirm the new president as a capable and honorable leader. ". . .[T]o complete and ratify the president's ascent to power, the inaugural

³³ Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs and Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and Genres of Governance. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. P. 15.

³⁴ *ibid.* P. 19.

address demonstrates rhetorically that this person can function as a leader with the constitutionally established limits of executive power and can perform the public, symbolic role of president of all the people."³⁶

Given the inauguration's exclusive focus on the presidency, and the person soon to assume its position, it is not surprising that tradition relegates the First Lady to the supportive sidelines. Further, given that the ceremony rests so heavily on the affirmation of tradition it is not surprising that the tradition of the silently supportive First Lady, accompanying yet not distracting from her husband, has been honored to date. In a time of change and uncertainty with executive succession, the inauguration relies on the comfort of the past and of tradition to provide stability. Because of the volatile time, the inauguration provides no for space for challenging tradition. The "limitations" of the executive branch are emphasized and respected. For the most part tradition goes unchallenged, even by non-traditional First Ladies.

As with any tradition, the First Lady's role in her husband's inauguration has been hostile to change. Some change, however, has been gradually implemented as individual women extended traditional boundaries, often reflecting women's changing role in society. At the 1917 inauguration, Edith Wilson was the first First Lady to ride in the car with her husband both to and from the swearing in ceremony.³⁷ Her actions proclaimed her an important support structure of her husband's administration. With her symbolic gesture, Wilson gently extended the acceptable role for the First Lady by taking an

³⁵ Procter, David E. and Ritter, Kurt. "Inaugurating the Clinton Presidency: Regenerative Rhetoric and the American Community." in Denton, Robert and Holloway, Rachel, eds. The Clinton Presidency: Images, Issues, and Communications Strategies. Westport: Praeger, 1996. P. 3.

³⁶ Campbell and Jamieson. P. 23.

³⁷ Caroli. P. 159.

incremental step. This was a timely step, foreshadowing what the future term would bring, as two years later her husband's administration would see through the passage of the twenty-second amendment, granting women suffrage.

Through the years, First Ladies have incrementally incorporated themselves into their husband's ceremonial inauguration. At the 1965 inauguration, Lady Bird Johnson became, at her husband's suggestion, the first First Lady to hold the Bible for the swearing in ceremony.³⁸ With this symbolic act, Lady Bird assumed a more active role in her husband's inauguration than any First Lady before her. Her challenge to precedent soon became tradition as other First Ladies followed suit. The incorporated responsibility of the First Lady holding the Bible enables her to provide silent support while also more actively participating in the ceremony. Both Rosalynn Carter and Nancy Reagan held their husband's old family Bibles for the swearing in. Carter's memory of her contribution to the inauguration celebrates both her ability to participate in the ceremony and to support her husband. "I stand to join him at the front of the platform and hold the Bible his mother gave him a few years ago while he takes the oath of office. It is a moment I will never forget. . . I have never felt so proud."³⁹ Similarly, Reagan's reflections on the inauguration ceremony attests to the symbolic stature of the event and way small changes are traditionalized. "But as I stood there with my husband, holding Nelle's Bible in my hand, I thought, *My Lord, here I am standing here, doing what I've seen other women do in photographs and on television. And It's me. And it's us. And It's really happening.*"⁴⁰ Even though wives had only held the Bible for the past four inaugurations, the gesture

³⁸ *ibid.* p. 368.

³⁹ Carter, Rosalynn. First Lady from Plains. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1984. p.4.

⁴⁰ Reagan, Nancy. My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan. New York: Random House. 1989. p. 233.

had been readily appropriated as tradition. This incremental expansions of tradition, in keeping with the spirit and symbolism of the event, was implemented with relative ease. If accomplished in the right manner, expansion of tradition can be gradually embraced into the realm of tradition.

President Clinton's inauguration also expanded the traditional format of the ceremony, not, however, with regards to his wife's role. As the second youngest president and first from the baby boom generation, President Clinton's inaugural festivities extended far beyond the traditional precedent. Indeed, the inaugural festivities mushroomed from the ceremony itself to a plethora of pre- and post-events, including eleven inaugural balls.⁴¹ The Clintons' old friend from Arkansas and current television producer, Harry Thomason, orchestrated the festivities, proving that this was not a traditional inauguration. The media coverage of the events similarly strayed from tradition. One media industry magazine reported that the inauguration "both drew unprecedented media coverage and media participation in the event itself."⁴² News programs and special reports covered the events throughout the day, and CNN featured all-day coverage. The print press provided equally extensive coverage and reviewed the ceremony and events.

⁴¹ Some have criticized the excesses of "inaugural week," including Elizabeth Drew who described the succession of events: "The multitude of white stretch limos (more characteristic of Republican inaugurations), the exploitation of national symbols (a concert at the Lincoln Memorial was sold to Home Box Office), the overstaged and overeager national bell ringing (various Indian tribes and the space shuttle were beamed in by satellite), the Las Vegas-like Presidential Gala at the mammoth Capital Center, with self-indulgent Hollywood celebrities (liberals, of course) lecturing the President-elect and the country. . ." (Drew, Elizabeth. *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1994. P. 17.)

⁴² Flint, Joe. "We are the World Watching: Clinton Inaugural Was a Feast for all Eyes as Media Gave it Full-Court Press." *Broadcasting*. January 25, 1993. P. 123-4. As quoted in Procter and Kurt. p. 9.

While the Clinton inauguration ushered in a new era of media omnipresence and the baby boom generation's energy, future-oriented outlook, and Hollywood hype, it did little to introduce a new era of the First Lady. Just as her predecessors had, Hillary Clinton stood silently by her husband, holding the Bible, as he was sworn in. She accompanied him to all events and walked with him in the ceremonial parade. The only time she strayed from tradition was during the parade when she walked along side of her husband, not holding his hand by his side as past First Ladies had done. For the most part, Clinton abided by tradition, accompanying and supporting her husband through her physical presence and vocal absence.

Had it not been for her exceptionally vocal and tradition-defying role in her husband's campaign for president, Clinton's traditional role in the inauguration would be of little interest. Juxtaposed to her involvement in the campaign, however, Clinton's silent accompaniment of her husband appears oddly out of character. Throughout the campaign, Clinton blatantly challenged assumptions about what a First Lady could and should do. The media, in turn, reacted strongly to Clinton and her unconventional role as spouse. As a wife, a mother, and a professional all at once, Clinton came to embody social fears of an overachieving and independent-minded wife. Clinton's clear capabilities and demonstrated use of them created a fear of a mutually-contributory presidential partnership. As one media observer noted, "Rather than the question of whether Hillary Clinton was worthy of the first lady position, as had been mentioned with Rachel Jackson, the issue focused on whether she was overqualified, even a candidate

herself, a would-be 'co-president.'"⁴³ That she unapologetically expressed an intention to yield political power disturbed the existing executive structure which located concentrated power in the hands of one man.

The notion of a woman exercising power by virtue of her marital vows triggered deep concerns with the American media. Early on in the campaign, the Clintons seemed to take the notion of an equal partnership farther than the public was ready for. "In January, Bill Clinton told a CNN interviewer that he might appoint her to a Cabinet post. 'I wouldn't rule it out,' he said. 'She'd be the best I could find.' At fund raisers, he used to quip, 'Buy one, get one free!'"⁴⁴ Further, when Clinton was asked to define the role of a First Lady, she responded, "A partner. A partner who represents for all of us a view of who her husband is, as well as a symbol of women's concerns and interests at a particular time."⁴⁵ The assumption the Clintons made, that Hillary Clinton's active participation in her husband's position would be a unquestioned asset, created fears of a presidency occupied by two rather than one. These statements fed a fear of an unelected co-presidency. The honesty of the statements implied a potential reconfiguration of political partnerships.

The media had a particularly difficult time reconciling the Clintons' defiance of established first lady boundaries. A sampling of "Hillary Bashing" articles includes *Time* magazine's cover story, "The Hillary Factor, Is She Helping Hurting Her Husband?"

⁴³ Winfield, Betty Houchin. "The First Lady, Political Power, and the Media: Who Elected her Anyway?" In Norris, Pippa, ed. *Women, Media, and Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1997. P. 176.

⁴⁴ Mcmurdy, Deirdre. "The Political Wife: Hillary Clinton Redefines Her Role." *Maclean's*. July, 1992. P. 34.

⁴⁵ O'Brien, Patricia. "The First Lady with a Career?" *Working Woman*. August 1992. P. 72.

(November) and William Safire's "The Hillary Problem."⁴⁶ By far the most scathing attacks came from Daniel Wattenberg in his essay "The Lady Macbeth of Little Rock" published in the August *American Spectator*. Wattenberg depicts Clinton as power-hungry, dominating, and self-absorbed:

The image of Mrs. Clinton that has crystallized in the public consciousness is, of course, that of Lady Macbeth: consuming ambition, inflexibility of purpose, domination of a pliable husband, and an unsettling lack of tender human feeling, along with the affluent feminist's contempt to traditional female roles.⁴⁷

Wattenberg continues on to cite Clinton's early professional involvements, likening her to a radical ungrounded liberal, throughout implying sexual deviance via feminist extremism. While Wattenberg's view represents the extreme, he was not alone in his thinking. According to a *New York Times* article by Robin Toner, "At least 20 articles in major publications this year involved some comparison between Mrs. Clinton and a grim role model for political wives: Lady Macbeth."⁴⁸ Clearly, the Clintons' open declaration of Hillary Clinton's qualifications and intentions for assuming a powerful position incited fears of an overbearing wife undermining presidential powers.

Clinton was a major target for attack during the Republican National Convention. Throughout the campaign a Republican strategy sought to make Clinton a campaign issue by casting her as the embodiment of all that was wrong with family values (the pillar catch phrase upholding the Republican election strategy), particularly working mothers who had lives outside of the home. One *New York Times* article reported, "In making her a focus of their attack strategy, the Republicans seem to have calculated that they can

⁴⁶ Safire, William. "The Hillary Problem." *New York Times*. March 32, 1992. P. A23.

⁴⁷ Wattenberg, Daniel. "The Lady Macbeth of Little Rock: Hillary Clinton's hard-left past and present." *The American Spectator*. August, 1992. P. 53.

shave votes off Governor Clinton's total by portraying his wife as a radical feminist who prefers the boardroom to the kitchen."⁴⁹ The Republican strategy included juxtaposing Clinton's more challenging style to Barbara Bush's traditional fulfillment of her role as First Lady. Clinton's hard edge proved an ideal contrast to Bush's matronly image. Bush embodied the traditional First Lady, supporting her husband, respecting his power without ever attempting to infringe upon it, while Clinton vocally expressed ideas and objectives independent from her husband.

One of the most visible Republican attacks against Clinton came during the Republican convention from Marilyn Quayle, the wife of Vice President Dan Quayle. Despite her obvious similarities to Clinton, including a law degree and an admitted "professional" role on her husband's staff, Quayle quickly jump on board the attack train. During her convention speech, Quayle spoke on behalf of her generation and defended the essentialist position of women in the home. "Not everyone believed that the family was so oppressive that women could only thrive apart from it," she asserted. She continued, with what would become frequently-quoted lines: "They're [liberals] disappointed because most women do not wish to be liberated from their essential natures as women. Most of us love being mothers and wives."⁵⁰ Quayle's comments produced fervor as many interpreted them as both an attack on Clinton personally and as a call to keep women limited to the home and out of the public sphere.

⁴⁸ Toner, Robin. "Backlash for Hillary Clinton Puts Negative Image to Rout." *New York Times*. September 24, 1992. P. A1.

⁴⁹ Carlson, Margaret. "All Eyes on Hillary." *New York Times*. September 14, 1992. P. A28.

⁵⁰ Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs. "Shadowboxing with Stereotypes: The Press, the Public and the Candidates' Wives." P. 8.

During the campaign, the attention and concern expressed around Clinton's potential role as First Lady revealed a general resistance to change. That Clinton could alter the traditional role of the First Lady so drastically incited fears about the presidential institution, and more generally about women's role in a changing society. The question repeatedly arose: was the nation ready for a First Lady who assumed the role of partner in her husband's administration? Some, particularly liberals and women's activists, embraced Clinton as a 90s ideal of a woman who successfully achieved everything, from a successful career to a happy family. Others, perhaps the more vocal of opinions, expressed grave concern that Clinton's role threatened the tradition and stability of the presidency. The vigor with which Clinton was attacked, however, suggests that more was at stake than how power was exercised within a particular administration. The openness with which Clinton sought to play a role in her husband's presidency implied that it was socially acceptable for a wife to match her husband's talents and apply them to a position he occupied. Acknowledging marriage as an equal partnership, both privately and professionally, destabilizes a tradition of gender roles within a family. Anxieties about the changing nature of the presidency and of women's role in society combined and manifested as attacks on Clinton. She indeed embodied a new generation and changing time. Even after President Clinton won the election, the question remained: was the nation ready for a radical reconception of the First Lady?

Throughout the campaign, the Clintons forced the nation to confront their assumption of and attachment to tradition. Hillary Clinton challenged tradition and stepped outside the boundaries of past precedent. For many, this proved an unsettling challenge. After the election, questions remained about how the role of the First Lady

would change with the Clintons' incoming. As the symbolic starting point, one that theoretically sets the tone, for the presidential term the inauguration significantly downplayed Clinton's role. Juxtaposed to her exceptionally active role in the campaign, Clinton's silence during the inauguration marked a dramatic change in her approach to her role. There could be no mistaking Clinton for an equal partner during the inauguration as she stood unobtrusively by her husband's side as he was sworn in and delivered his speech. The Clinton included in the "buy one get one free" duo had become a recluse and in her place emerged a more traditional First Lady evading the spotlight and directing full attention to her husband.

II) SPEECH ANALYSIS

In the tradition of her predecessors, Clinton did not deliver any speeches for her husband's inauguration. Following months of a campaign where she actively defied tradition, for the ceremonial introduction of her husband to the presidency, Clinton opted for the traditional role of First Lady. As her husband assumed the nation's highest office, Clinton celebrated with him within the existing framework of the First Lady. The only hint of the Clinton who stirred controversy during the campaign appeared during the ritual parade from the Capitol to the White House. The parade provides an opportunity for the newly-sworn-in President and First Lady to enter their new home in the company of the people who elected them, for an opportunity of mutual acknowledgment. Traditionally the First Couple holds hands as they stroll down the parade route, waving together as one unit. The Clintons, however, spilt up. She walked along the left side and he the right, each waving to their respective crowd side. This efficient means of

approaching a large-scale parade insured that no one side was neglected. Moreover, it cast the first couple as two autonomous individuals, each with their own agendas to fulfill. Occasionally, they would come back together and hold hands as they walked, confirming their couplehood. This was the Clinton that campaigned throughout 1992: confident in herself and in her husband, two autonomous individuals forming an impressive partnership. Through the rest of the inaugural events, however, the partnership divided along traditional lines, where he was the president and she his wife.

The inauguration is virtually an exclusively symbolic event comprised of traditional gestures that work to simultaneously affirm past precedents and usher in a new time. Gestures made at each inauguration signal stability in an uncertain time. Clinton respects the symbolism of the events by fulfilling, and not challenging, the traditional role of First Lady. Clinton's role in the campaign clearly signals that she intends to reconceptualize the role of the First Lady. Her role in the inauguration suggests that she deemed a challenge to established tradition inappropriate for the traditional inaugural events. Clinton chose to remain within traditional confines and play the largely symbolic role of the supportive First Lady. Throughout her husband's inauguration, Clinton recognizes the importance of symbolic events and gestures.

That the inauguration is largely symbolic, however, offers an ideal opportunity for Clinton to make a symbolic gesture. Indeed, a radical statement or defiance of tradition could not find a more suitable setting than a presidential inauguration. Even a small gesture of challenge could be interpreted as disruptive to an event based almost entirely on past precedent. If Clinton had opted to speak during the inauguration, perhaps after her husband's speech, she would have definitively set the tone for the upcoming term by

negating the pertinence of tradition in her interpretation of the First Lady's role. Apparently, she did not deem such a radical statement necessary. Perhaps, her intentions for renegotiating the First Lady's role were not as drastic as they may have been interpreted during the campaign. Perhaps, her intentions involved mere expansion, and not blatant defiance. Or perhaps, the extreme reactions she provoked cautioned her against any dramatic changes and reminded her of the American public's deep attachment to tradition. Perhaps, the attacks she endured prevented her from putting herself on the line as she had done during the campaign. Perhaps, she reasoned that if she mimed the symbolic gestures she could then move beyond the traditional role to accomplish what she truly wanted to. Speculations abound and answers will never be confirmed, but Clinton's role in the inauguration sent a clear message: that she could most certainly play the role of the traditional First Lady. At the inauguration, Clinton set the tone for her role in her husband's administration unambiguously as the First Lady, assuring the nation that she could fulfill the role in the tradition of her predecessors.

III) MEDIA ANALYSIS

In keeping with Clinton's own set precedent, the media covered her involvement in the inauguration in the custom of a traditional First Lady. Much of Clinton's media coverage during the inauguration focused on her appearance. The coverage that did not focus on her appearance stressed Clinton's unnerving potential for a dramatic break from tradition. Coverage highlighted Clinton's past involvements, that wielded a considerable amount of power, with her husband's political position and suggested a potential for undermining the President's authority. Such articles expressed an anxiety about a First

Lady breaking from tradition. Juxtaposed to this anxiety, the larger body of articles focused on her appearance, affirming her position as First Lady and holding her accountable to traditional expectations. Given her status as a supportive body on the sideline, however, it is appropriate that the media concentrated on what she looked like, for silent support does not lend itself to particularly constructive reporting.

While perhaps not exclusively constructive, media coverage was definitely extensive. The inaugural swearing in ceremony took place on January 20. Judging by media coverage, however, the entire month of January was inaugural month. From January 1 to January 31, a total of 48 articles with Clinton's name in them appeared in the *New York Times*. Put into context this proves an exceptionally large number of articles. For example, during the month of January in 1989, when George Bush was inaugurated, a modest total of 14 articles mentioned Barbara Bush.⁵¹ Clinton's coverage almost quadrupled that of her predecessor, setting a new precedent of visibility for the First Lady's participation in inaugural events. Of the original 48 articles, eleven were omitted for they were not substantial articles. The discarded articles included letters to the editor, the published inaugural schedule, news briefs under 100 words, and corrections. Of the remaining 37 articles, a majority 27 mentioned Clinton and ten focused on her. The 27 articles mentioning Clinton ranged in their focus on various topics including the First Daughter, Chelsea's school, White House administrative logistics, her accompaniment of the President to various engagements, and her role in inaugural festivities.

⁵¹ A *Lexus-Nexus* search of "Barbara and Bush" January 1 through January 31, 1989 produced a total of 22 titles. This includes any article in the *New York Times* that features her name, in any context, in any part of the text.

Most notably, thirteen of the 27, roughly half of the articles that mention Clinton, do so with reference to her appearance. From her clothes, to her accessories, to her hair, everything Clinton wore excited fascination. Articles about headbands suddenly appeared with Clinton's name appearing in the first paragraph.⁵² Articles featured profiles on Clinton's apparel designers and interviews with Arkansas store owners speculating on Clinton's favorite color.⁵³ As one article aptly put it: "Whether she likes the idea or not, Hillary Clinton is the country's latest fashion icon."⁵⁴ The ten articles that focused on Clinton during the inaugural month feature an interesting combination of Clinton's appearance and curiosity around her role in her husband's administration. Two focus on what she wore and three profile her, speculating on what is to come for the role of the First Lady. The remaining five articles that feature Clinton report on the President's announcement, five days after the inauguration, that his wife will head the Administration's health care reform task force.⁵⁵

Of the 37 total articles that feature Clinton's name during the inaugural month, eight focus on Clinton's involvement in the inauguration. Half of these articles mention Clinton and the other half focus on her. Clinton received a substantial amount of inaugural coverage given that she played no formal role and made no remarks during the events. During the Bush inauguration only one article focused on Barbara Bush's

⁵² Donovan, Carrie. "By Design: Chic Notes for Up Top." *New York Times*. January 19, 1993. P. B7.

⁵³ Morris, Bernadine. "Designing Woman; At the Inaugural Balls, Cinderella's the Designer." *New York Times*. January 15, 1993. P. A15.

⁵⁴ Schiro, Anne-Marie. "Middle-of-the-Road Fashion Plates." *New York Times*. January 19, 1993. P. B7.

⁵⁵ Because these articles do not directly pertain to the inauguration they will not be reviewed in this chapter.

involvement in her husband's inauguration, reporting on her blue gown.⁵⁶ The coverage of Clinton around the inauguration proves an interesting combination of investigation into her potential role as a novel First Lady redefining the boundaries and as a traditional First Lady struggling to meet with both high physical and social appearance expectations.

The first article focusing on the inauguration and Clinton was Michael Kelly's "The Inauguration; The First Couple: A Union of Mind and Ambition." The first sentence in the article clearly establishes its premise: "In Little Rock they have a word for it: Billary."⁵⁷ Kelly continues on depict the Clintons' professional and private relationship, as perceived in Arkansas, as seamless. In an effort to predict what the new First Couple might bring to the executive office, Kelly explores the history and accomplishments of the couple while serving public office in Arkansas. Such an exploration leads him to conclude that Clinton's history, "makes clear her position as the most influential person in any administration headed by her husband." Such an assertion is troubling, particularly on the heels of a campaign where Clinton's power was exaggerated and feared. As Kelly portrays them, the Clintons seem to acknowledge this. "When he is asked, as he often is these days, to define the role his wife will play in his Administration, Bill Clinton is expansive, but vague. Hillary Clinton whose Inaugural Week appearances have been either private or silent, has mostly avoided interviews for months." Kelly notes Clinton's absence and seems to imply a conscious repositioning. He stops short of speculating on why Clinton has evaded publicity, but seems to imply that it is a reaction to public fears of too much power.

⁵⁶ Bohlen, Celestine. "The 41st President: The Parties; Brilliant in Blue, First Lady is Indeed Belle of Ball." *New York Times*. January 21, 1989. P. A8.

While Kelly expansively explores Clinton's actions and visibility as a power wielder, he shies away from exploring her less powerful silent position adopted during the inauguration. When reviewing one gubernatorial campaign, however, Kelly adopts the opposite strategy, focusing on changes made and traditional positions assumed.

Hillary Rodham, a bespectacled and slightly hippieish feminist lawyer, was widely considered one of the reasons her husband lost his office in 1980 after his first term as Governor. But Mrs. Bill Clinton --re-incarnated for his 1982 re-election bid as a more traditional political wife, complete with contact lenses, shorter, blonder hair and ladylike dresses-- became at least as popular as her husband, and eventually emerged as his most important political asset.

After suggesting a change in Clinton's approach to her role through her inaugural involvement, Kelly explicitly proposes a calculated dramatic change in her approach to her role as Arkansas' First Lady to further campaign efforts. Thus, Kelly's article casts Clinton as a political liability: a non-conventional wife intruding on her husband's powers, whereby alienating voters. But, as demonstrated in Arkansas, with proper refinement, Clinton could successfully play the traditional role, winning praise from voters and politicians alike.

The Clinton that Kelly depicts would certainly not retreat into a silent role during inaugural week without calculated strategic intentions. Kelly calls attention to Clinton's uncharacteristic silence without exploring it, but he implies that perhaps a similar calculation is happening. By examining her past roles, Kelly indirectly expresses concern over the role Clinton will play as First Lady. He reveals a feeling of both curiosity and reprehension about the new First Lady and her potential to upset tradition.

⁵⁷ Kelly, Michael. "The Inauguration; The First Couple: A Union of Mind and Ambition." *New York Times*. January 20, 1993. P. A13.

The next article to cover Clinton's involvement in the inauguration concentrates more explicitly on what role Clinton will play in her husband's administration. Appearing the day of the swearing in ceremony, the article blatantly questions: "An Office First for First Lady?" The question is more specifically posed in the opening line of the article: "Will Hillary Clinton be the first First Lady to boast an office in the West Wing of the White House?" The article then goes on to answer its own question: "With the Clintons due to move in momentarily, Bush Administration officials are saying the decision has been made along the lines of a classically Clintonian compromise: Mrs. Clinton will work in the West Wing, home of the President's Oval Office, but on the second floor instead of the first."⁵⁸ Concerns about a First Lady extending the boundaries of her power were excited by the potential for a First Lady's permanent presence in the West Wing. As home to the oval office, the West Wing is the symbolic nucleus of executive power. Top advisors and assistants are graced with the honor of a West Wing office. Much like the inauguration, the West Wing is symbolic above all else.

The potential for a First Lady to penetrate the power center incited fears of an overbearing First Lady and an Administration flippant towards tradition. Ultimately, where Clinton's office was located would be of minimal consequence, yet the upset to traditional symbolism was real. The decision to establish an office in the West Wing contradicts Clinton's silent role in the inauguration. Assuming an office in the West Wing made a clear statement that Clinton would contribute to the Administration in a significant and official way. This was exactly the statement she avoided making through her participation in the inauguration.

⁵⁸ Special to the *New York Times*. "An Office First for First Lady?" *New York Times*. January 20, 1993.

The one gesture Clinton made during the inauguration that marked her as a non-traditional First Lady was her detachment from her husband during the parade procession. That she walked separately from him as they waved to the crowds proved a bountiful topic of media coverage. Maureen Dowd and Frank Rich commented on the deviation from the norm in their article, "Picking Up the Perks of Presidential Power."⁵⁹ Their article highlights, in jest, the "cynicism in the press" towards the Clintons in general, and the inauguration in particular. Then, in honor of the historic event, they offer "the new White House a one-day free pass." They focus in on Clinton, both accentuating criticism and paying a compliment (of sorts):

There will be no alarm expressed about the blue unidentified flying object that landed on Hillary Clinton's head or the tan tourniquet applied to her neck. Rather, congratulations to the First Lady for independently striding down the parade route, walking at her own pace, several yards out of the shadow of a husband who had to stretch to cling to her hand if there was hand-holding to be done.

Dowd and Rich's commentary acknowledges the much-discussed inaugural day accessories. They seem to mock both her for wearing such ridiculous accessories and the media for paying so much attention to them. Continuing in their mocking fashion, Dowd and Rich call attention to the non-conventional way that the Clintons approached the parade procession. Their tone suggests that Clinton took off in her own right, leaving her husband behind, struggling to catch up to her in what should be his time of glory. The implication is that the new First Lady did not respect the boundaries of her role as wife and as First Lady.

P. A13.

⁵⁹ Dowd, Maureen and Rich, Frank. "Picking up the Perks of Presidential Power." *New York Times*. January 21, 1993. P. A11.

Another article expressed subtle concern over the issue of the parade walk. David Rosenbaum's article "January High Noon: Hail Meets Farewell" tracks the 24-hour inaugural period. When he reports on the parade, Rosenbaum observes, disapprovingly, of the Clinton's walk:

For the most part, they did not hold hands the way the Carters, Reagans and Bushes did when they walked down the avenue after their inaugurations. Rather, the Clintons walked about 10 feet apart, he waving to the right side of the street and she to the left. Occasionally, he reached over and took her hand, and they walked together for a few paces, but then they pulled apart and resumed waving separately.⁶⁰

Rosenbaum's first concern is that the Clintons' approach differed from that of the Carters, Reagans and Bushes, suggesting the disruptive nature of straying from tradition. From Rosenbaum's perspective, past precedent seems to define the event; thus, when precedent is not followed it cannot go unnoticed.

The Clintons' deviation from tradition also fed an anxiety about two autonomous individuals working within a partnership to assume the presidency. By way of Rosenbaum's depiction, the Clintons neatly divided responsibility for the electorate into two, whereby he tends to his responsibilities, she to hers, and everyone is happily accounted for. This type of equal partnership was the exact cause of turmoil during the campaign. The rationale behind the fear of the presidential partnership is that one man is elected to serve the full duties of the presidency. The elected man has to be strong enough to assume presidential duties, unchallenged in his authority, and worthy of presidential-caliber respect. If the president is in a relationship where he does not hold clear authority it reflects poorly upon the institution of the presidency. The picture of a

⁶⁰ Rosenbaum, David E. "January High Noon: Hail Meets Farewell." *New York Times*. January 21, 1993. P. A1.

president having to reach over and take hold of his wife's hand during his inaugural parade does not create the image of a man with unsurpassed authority. Clinton's own autonomy and determination, as portrayed in the article, subtly undermines her husband's power as she demonstrates her own. In these few sentences, Rosenbaum suggests that the Clintons not only broke with tradition by approaching the presidency as a partnership, but further that Hillary Clinton is not entirely cooperative in the role of First Lady.

In addition to concern about an increase in power of the First Lady's role, as illustrated by the previous four articles, another body of media coverage focusing on Clinton's participation in the inauguration concerns itself exclusively with her appearance. Such articles approach Clinton in the traditional First Lady format, judging her as she appears by her husband's side. In so far as Clinton fills the traditional role of the First Lady, standing by her husband's side, reinforcing the order of the nuclear family and the President's authority, the media reports her as such. When she acts a role which is strictly to be seen, then the media accordingly reports what is seen. This congruent relationship between the media and Clinton follows that of past precedent and respects the symbolic and ceremonial nature of the event. Indeed, the inauguration is perhaps the only instance when extensive coverage of Clinton's appearance is appropriate.

That is not to say, however, that it is entirely unproblematic. Exhaustive coverage of her appearance, without mention of other factors, reduces Clinton to ornamental status and undermines her ability to extend beyond those boundaries. In her essay, entitled "The Hillary Factor," Barbara Pickering has asserted that, "By evaluating Mrs. Clinton's appearance, she is marginalizes, in an effort to exclude her from the public realm and

relegate her to the role of a domestic Presidential wife."⁶¹ While an argument with merit, it does not go far in the case of the inauguration, for the domestic presidential wife was the role Clinton decidedly projected when she assumed a silent position at her husband's side. It does, however, signal the importance of media coverage and highlight potential problems Clinton may face as her role fluctuates between policy maker and First Lady.

The coverage of Clinton's inaugural appearance went beyond simply reporting or commenting on Clinton's appearance and extended into a bizarre fascination. Even before the inauguration, articles detailed what Clinton planned to wear. Providing a fashion preview of sorts, Anne-Marie Schiro's "Middle-of-the-Road Fashion Plates" outlines Clinton's pre-determined outfit and its designers. That such information is worthy of its own article demonstrates the degree to which media concerns lie with Clinton's appearance. Through the media's coverage, what Clinton wore seemed to take on a life of its own. Schiro blatantly explains, "Whether she likes the idea or not, Hillary Clinton is the country's latest fashion icon."⁶²

More than anything else, media reports of Clinton's appearance were harsh, often mocking, criticisms. In Walter Goodman's (appropriately enough) "Critic's Notebook: In the Inaugural of Inclusion, All the Arts Are In," he observed: "Hillary Clinton, who evidently has other things on her mind and agenda, does not seem to go in for style-setting of that [Jacqueline Kennedy] sort."⁶³ The media repeatedly dismissed Clinton's fashion senses. Anne-Marie Schiro begins her article "A Blue Hat Has Critics Wondering," by stating this explicitly: "Pity Hillary Clinton. A woman who never put

⁶¹ Pickering, Barbara. P. 354.

⁶² Schiro, Anne-Marie. "Middle-of-the-Road Fashion Plates." *New York Times*. January 19, 1993. P. B7.

fashion high on her list of priorities is being criticized left and right for what she has been wearing for the inaugural festivities this week."⁶⁴ Yet Schiro's pity does not extend far, for she continues on to criticize Clinton herself. "The main target: the hat. A blue velour number with a turned-back brim that some say made her look like a chipmunk." Clinton just could not seem to get it right according to the media. Yet, her failure to produce something wonderful, or ever something tolerable, did not sway the media from its conviction to cover her appearance exhaustively; indeed, it stimulated it.

Fascinated as the media was by Clinton's attire, it turned the clothes themselves and their makers into story pieces. The designs, the choices, and the people behind Clinton's appearance emerged as its own interest story. Schiro's article alone tracks two different fashion designers, one wardrobe consultant, and one hair dresser that contributed to the final Clinton product. The body of the article focuses on the making of her appearance more than the appearance itself. An article by Patricia Leigh Brown, "Pomp, Patriotism and Primping," follows similar suit. Brown's article covers the inaugural evening and its various event with the company and commentary of Clinton's hair dresser. "As President Clinton took the oath of office, the fate of the nation symbolized by a single right hand held high, a hush came over the beauty salon of Gabriel DeBakey, the First Lady's inaugural evening hair dresser."⁶⁵ Brown goes on to draw a parallel between the President's political tactics and the First Lady's hair: "He described the First Lady's hair the way detractors have described her husband. 'You can give it any form,' he explained. 'It's very malleable.'" Because of the media hype around Clinton's appearance, DeBakey's

⁶³ Goodman, Walter. "Critic's Notebook; In the Inaugural of Inclusion, All the Arts are In." *New York Times*. January 21, 1993. P. C20.

⁶⁴ Schiro, Anne-Marie. "A Blue Hat Has Critics Wondering." *New York Times*. January 22, 1993. P. A15

opinion becomes of national importance, something it surely would not have been even a day before the inauguration. In the media's eye, Clinton's appearance became a production in and of itself, with its own complete cast and crew.

The subject of much media probing was the designers behind Clinton's inaugural get-up. Bernadine Morris' article, "Designing Woman; At the Inaugural balls, Cinderella's the Designer," profiles Sarah Phillips, the inaugural dress designer. The dramatic portrayal of Phillips' designing triumph expands curiosity beyond the dress to the designer's personal and professional life. "A dream come true? After only three seasons of making fashion collections, the 37-year-old Miss Phillips, who was born in Manhattan, has hit the big time."⁶⁶ Media attention shifts away from Clinton towards those who contributed to the formation of her appearance. Coverage prioritizes the fairy tale success story of Phillips over more substantive stories of Clinton herself. Such coverage emphasizes and reinforces the gravity of an inaugural appearance, with particular regards to fashion. An air of importance is created around the inaugural fashion statement. For Morris, the importance is timeless: "The dress the First Lady wears to the inaugural balls goes to the Smithsonian Institution, becoming a part of American history, not just fashion history." The hype created around the inaugural appearance to some degree justifies the necessity of cast and crew to form the proper Clinton creation. Morris' article, while slightly heavy handed, showcases the media's determination to make Clinton's inaugural appearance and event in and of itself.

⁶⁵ Brown, Patricia Leigh. "Pomp Patriotism and Primping." *New York Times*. January 21, 1993. P. A16.

⁶⁶ Morris, Bernadine. "Designing Woman; At the Inaugural Balls, Cinderella's the Designer." *New York Times*. January 15, 1993. P. A15.

Profiling the creators behind Clinton's outfit, decidedly prioritized Clinton's physical appearance as media and public concern worthy. In addition to Morris' article on Phillips, Valerie Cruice produced a similar article on the inaugural hat designer, Darcy Creech. "How the Hat From Southport Went to the Inaugural" questions, "So how did the First Lady-to-be in Little Rock, Ark., connect with a young hat designer from Southport, Conn.?"⁶⁷ While perhaps not the most pressing question of our time, the article pursues its inquiry intently. Written after the inauguration, the article acknowledges the criticisms that the hat instigated. "Hillary Rodham Clinton's inaugural hat, the cadet blue one that nearly everybody had an opinion about, was designed by 30-year-old Darcy Creech, who still cannot believe hers was the chosen one." The subtle mention of controversy around the hat perhaps explains the extensive attention paid to its creator. It seems little else could account for the fascination that the hat provoked, if not the edge of controversy. The lengthy article reviews Creech's professional history, how she came to be the hat designer of choice, and even where she was on the big inaugural night: "Ms. Creech celebrated with friends at a local restaurant, and wore her prototype of the inaugural hat -- with her hair in a ponytail, of course." The intrigue stirred by the hat curiously becomes its own news-worthy story.

The importance placed on Clinton's appearance seemed to take on a life of its own, creating celebrities and popularizing new accessories. But beyond that, media coverage stressed that what mattered about Clinton was what she looked like, and that the contribution she could make to history would be in the realm of fashion. A substantial amount of media coverage relegated Clinton to the sphere of appearances, creating a hype

⁶⁷ Cruice, Valerie. "How the Hat From Southport Went to the Inaugural." *New York Times*. January 31,

around the production of her physical appearance while simultaneously criticizing it. While perhaps confused on whether Clinton's appearance was a grand-scale production with trend-setting consequence or a serious failure, one thing that the media made explicitly clear was that Clinton's appearance was of momentous importance.

IV) CONCLUSION

During the inauguration, Clinton respects the symbolic importance of the ceremony and assumes the traditional role of the First Lady. The media, content to report Clinton as a traditional First Lady within an established framework, fails to acknowledge the seeming discrepancy between her active role in the campaign and her more passive role in the inauguration. Without out-rightly acknowledging it, however, the media expresses an anxiety about a First Lady who challenges tradition. The media respects Clinton's decision to assume the traditional role of the First Lady by providing coverage consistent with her actions, but does so with some hesitation. The hesitation manifests itself in a disjointed portrait of Clinton where she is both a threatening influential First Lady and a ornamental symbol of support.

Media coverage of Clinton's involvement in the inauguration, for the most part, follows on par with the convention of traditional First Lady coverage. As supportive ornamentation beside her husband, the traditional First Lady invites attention focusing on what she looks like. The efforts that Clinton and various fashion contributors devoted to the inauguration acknowledge the importance of the First Lady's appearance and anticipates extensive media coverage. The degree to which the media created a hype

around Clinton's appearance, and its various contributing elements, perhaps could not be anticipated. The extensive media attention granted to the production of Clinton's appearance provides a stark contrast to the coverage which demeans Clinton's fashion sensibility. Indicative comments, such as Goodman's, that Clinton, "...does not seem to go in for style-setting. . .," or Schiro's depiction of Clinton as, "A woman who never put fashion high on her list of priorities. . ." dismisses Clinton's ability to make fashionably conscious decisions. Given the importance of the physical presentation of the supportive First Lady, the implication that she cannot properly suit herself undermines her portrayed ability to fulfill her role. A First Lady is all that much more disappointing if she cannot make such decisions even with the contribution of consultants, multiple designers, and hairdressers. The articles that undermine Clinton's fashion taste and the articles that portray her appearance construction as a major production combine to produce an insulting conclusion that Clinton's fashion sense will not suffice, nor will her taste in assistants, or worse, that even with assistance she cannot pull it off.

Media coverage works both to reaffirm Clinton's position as a traditional First Lady, by focusing extensively on her appearance, and to undermine her ability to fulfill that position, by implying her incompetence to fashionably inspire in the tradition of her more fashionably-conscious predecessors. This seemingly contradictory coverage makes sense in the larger context of the media's coverage. While the second body of coverage of Clinton's inaugural involvement focuses on her appearance, the first focuses indirectly on the potential for Clinton to break with tradition and the anxiety that will produce. Articles express the fear around the notion of a presidential partnership and a First Lady who assumes an admittedly influential position in her husband's administration, as

demonstrated by the attention paid to the possibility of an office in the ever-symbolic West Wing. Further, that the First Couple approaches the parade as two autonomous individuals, each catering to their own side, rather than a solidified unit, signals a deviation from traditional norms. Articles that feature such gestures of dissent from tradition, regardless of how slight, represent anxiety in the face of change. Moreover, such coverage implies that regardless of what role Clinton plays, traditional or otherwise, she will have trouble successfully fulfilling the role.

On the one hand, the media reports what Clinton's role is and attempts to predict the changes that may ensue, and on the other, it focuses on the traditional First Lady priority: her appearance. The media expresses a reluctance to change though its articles on Clinton's unconventional power and the disruption that it may pose, and perhaps overcompensates with excessive traditional-type coverage of appearance. The media readily obliges to report Clinton as she fulfills the traditional role of the First Lady, appearing at her husband's side. When Clinton assumes the silent role on the sideline the media mirrors her chosen position in its coverage of her appearance. Admittedly, though the media reflects her actions at the inauguration, it does not necessarily do so in the kindest of terms. More comfortable with her role on the sideline than in the West Wing, the media indirectly implies Clinton's inability to properly fill the role of First Lady.

The media portrays Clinton in extremes: as either the overbearing wife, certain to run the First Ladyship amuck, or as the ornamental support beside her husband for his inauguration. No balance between the two seems negotiable. She is either the influential power-wielder or the supportive First Lady, never both. Such reporting, however, is not surprising. Media coverage is often grounded in extremes to entice readership. W. Lance

Bennett's conception of the news as a "consumer good," whose primary purpose is to excite readership not necessarily to report all relevant facts, attest to this.⁶⁸

Beyond, media's own tendencies, however, Clinton too cast herself in extremes. Throughout the campaign, Clinton out rightly expressed her intentions of playing a significant role in her husband's administration. She was outspoken and determined to use her professional expertise to contribute politically. During the inauguration, however, when the tone for the upcoming term is symbolically set, Clinton remained silent, cautiously playing the role of the traditional First Lady. From the campaign to the inauguration, Clinton jumped from one extreme to the other without a transition or explanation. The media completely overlooked this drastic change in her role. While Kelly acknowledged that Clinton's, "...Inaugural Week appearances have been either private or silent" he stops short of further probing. Clinton's quiet role in the inauguration was interpreted by the media as a natural involvement for a First Lady, without regard to Clinton's tendency to stray from the norm during the campaign. In fact, the media was largely uninterested in the discrepancy in Clinton's behavior between the campaign and the inauguration. Coverage spilt into two bodies: one that focuses on her past traditionally-defiant actions and the potential for traditional upset and the other on her ornamental role in the inauguration. The media seems content to report Clinton within the traditional framework, despite the relatively apparent contrast it posed to her earlier role. Both the media and Clinton herself, divide her neatly into two roles without acknowledging that they coexist in one figure.

⁶⁸ Bennett. P. 3.

At this beginning point in the Clinton Administration, neither Clinton nor the media can successfully negotiate her role as one cohesive figure. While Clinton is torn between two extreme roles, the media exacerbates her troubles by implying that she cannot completely succeed at either. She fails to balance her policy and professional tendencies with the traditional First Lady's role. Without such an example, the media too is unable to conceptualize a power-wielding First Lady. The confusion around what role Clinton plays produces a disjointed picture of her, where she is either one extreme or another. Indeed, the only thing that is certain about Clinton's role is that she is a subject of great fascination. The notion of Clinton as a disjointed figure is further complicated by the announcement three days after the inauguration of her appointment to head the president's task force on health care reform.

CHAPTER THREE

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY:

TRADITION DEFIED

I) CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

"I trust I am not a fanatic, but I do want my influence to be always in favor of temperance...it is true I shall violate a precedent; but I shall not violate the constitution, which is all that, through my husband, I have taken an oath to obey."

-Lucy Hayes⁶⁹

Lucy Hayes was a true believer in the benefits of the temperance movement, but as she declared in 1878, publicly she did not want to make it a "cause." For any active involvement with a political issue would undoubtedly solicit unwanted attention. Much like Hayes, Hillary Clinton championed a cause that she believed could better society in profound ways. Unlike Hayes' decision to remain out of the public discourse, a decision most likely influenced by historical context, Clinton out-rightly politicized and publicized her cause. Hayes' decision to "influence" and "favor" an issue violated a precedent of an apolitical supportive First Lady. Similarly, Hillary Clinton's involvement with health care reform efforts violated that still-existing precedent in an almost revolutionary manner.

⁶⁹ Lucy Webb Hayes: A Memorial Sketch. Cincinnati: Women's Home Missionary Society. 1890. As quoted in Anthony, Carl Sferrazza. First Ladies. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1990. P. 230.

Just five days after assuming office, President Clinton appointed his wife to head the task force overseeing his Administration's primary policy objective: to reform the health care system. This was the most dramatic departure from First Lady precedent that the institution had ever witnessed. As a professional careerist, Clinton herself broke from the tradition of past First Ladies. Added to that, an official appointment to her husband's Administration most certainly violated precedent. In their tale of the Clinton's battle over health care reform, *The System*, Haynes Johnson and David Broder dramatically observed: "She was not only America's first career professional First Lady; she had also been given authority never previously granted a President's wife to shape policy. She had not been elected to anything or confirmed to any position, but here she was, exercising real and visible power."⁷⁰ While Johnson and Broder's observation fails to recognize that no presidential appointee is elected, and further, that no one appointed to an advisory position to the President (in the form of a task force, a commission, or otherwise) need be confirmed, their message of a unprecedented power is clear. Hillary Clinton's appointment to and her subsequent exercise of the position heading the task force translated into the Clintons' declaration that the First Lady of yesterday was in fact obsolete.

For nine months, Clinton worked with the task force to develop a piece of legislation that would provide comprehensive health coverage for all American. Working within the system, Clinton also had to make amends to insure, to the best of her ability, that it would be a feasibly passable piece of legislation. Clinton's approach to the task force was thus three-fold: make it work for the people, make it work for the health

⁷⁰ Johnson, Haynes and Broder, David. *The System*. New York: Little, Brown and Company. 1997. P.

industry (including doctors, insurers, and everyone in between), and finally make it work for Congress. Clinton readily assumed the responsibility for an enormous undertaking, conscious of its accompanying difficulties, and tenaciously determined to reform the system. In an interview with Johnson and Broder, the President acknowledged the weighty task his Administration had taken on: "I knew from the beginning it was a very big thing, something no one had ever been able to do before . . . I knew that it was an issue with a lot of downside and a high probability of failure."⁷¹ Thus the First Lady not only assumed a controversial power-wielding position in her husband's Administration, but she did so for a cause with "a high probability of failure."⁷² The controversy around the prospect of health care reform was only heightened by Clinton's role as the task force head, and vice versa.

As Clinton traveled the country, meeting people and learning of their health coverage concerns, she also worked extensively within the Washington belt-way, hoping to appease concerns on both sides of the political table. In the mean time, the news media settled its attention on her, usually at the expense of the plan itself. Theda Skocpol, in her book *Boomerang* which focuses on the health care reform effort, asserts that media criticism of the reform efforts often manifested as demonization of the First Lady. "Both Mrs. Clinton's relationship to her husband, and the prominent roles she took for health care reform were ripe for attack, especially as the Health Security proposal was publicly

103.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 96.

⁷² An interview with Task Force second-in-command, Ira C. Magaziner, clearly conveyed a similar position to that of the President. According to Mr. Magaziner, both he and Mrs. Clinton were well aware of the difficulties they would face attempting to reform the multi-interest health care system. Taking it head on, they knew, would be an incredibly difficult, if not impossible, task.

redefined as big-government 'meddling' in private arrangements."⁷³ Citing talk radio shows, cartoons, and more conservative "high-brow" publications, Skocpol maintains that some media outputs sought to scare insured middle-class Americans into believing a Clinton-imposed government take over of health care that would force them into low-quality, mandatory, managed-care plans.

Additional criticism targeted Clinton personally. "By using Hillary Rodham Clinton as a target, cartoonists and talk radio hosts could ridicule the Clinton plan for its alleged governmental overweeningness--and in the process subliminally remind people how much they resent strong women."⁷⁴ Clinton provided a useful scapegoat for anxieties over health security, while simultaneously revealing anxieties over the changing position of women in society. Positive and negative coverage aside, Clinton's position as head of a presidential task force, tackling socially-imperative health care policy, marked a historic occurrence. This monumental political event culminated with Clinton's congressional testimony.

II) SPEECH ANALYSIS

Almost nine months to the day that the President named the First Lady to head his task force on health care, Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered a much-anticipated congressional testimony proposing the final reform initiative. On Tuesday morning, September 28, 1993, Clinton came before the House Ways and Means committee, chaired by Representative Dan Rostenkowski. The first testimony in a series of five, Clinton demonstrated her mastery of the ever-complex health care system. Her presentation was

⁷³ Skocpol, Theda. *Boomerang*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. 1996. P. 150.

met with great favor by the committee members. Johnson and Broder enthusiastically noted: "Most members of Congress, in that male-dominated bastion of political power, were almost obsequious --many women thought patronizing-- in their praise."⁷⁵ Johnson and Broder's assessment aside, Clinton's presentation clearly impressed the members. After a turbulent road to get there, it seemed momentarily that all of the frustrations and challenges mounted had ultimately paid off with the success of her testimony. Clinton delivered a relatively brief speech which introduced the plan and the impetus behind it. Following the introduction, Clinton fielded the members' questions. Throughout the testimony, Clinton strives to combine her role as First Lady with her role as a policy-maker. Her rhetorical strategy reveals a conscious effort to appease the expectations that accompany both roles. A personal, emotional appeal coincides with a First Lady rhetoric, while a more authoritative, expert appeal compliments the policy-maker rhetoric. How she uses each style reveals the difficulty she has in attempting to balance her two traditionally very different roles.

Clinton's introductory remarks, striving to reconcile her position as policy maker and as First Lady, serve to demonstrate the necessity of health care reform for a successful nation. Establishing her position as the congressional witness and as the head of the task force, Clinton sets the environment for her to confront daunting policy challenges posed during the question and answer period. Clinton opens her remarks by thanking members of congress for their involvement in drafting the bill. She thanks them, not for their policy expertise or political savvy, but for the personal pleasure of getting to know them. "It has been a real personal pleasure for me to get to know many

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 152.

of you personally....," she tells the committee members. Clinton addresses her audience as one might a new group of friends, not a common approach to testifying before the Ways and Means committee.

The atmosphere Clinton creates from the start is not one strictly of business, but that of personal relationships. She clearly believes that established camaraderie better allows for the necessary move "... toward the realization that health care reform must be achieved for the good of our country." Thus within the first few sentences, Clinton recasts the situation from one of the First Lady presenting a proposal for a major overhaul of the nation's health care system to the most powerful committee of the House of Representatives, to a group of comrades joining together to improve health care for the good of the people. This subtle shift creates an entirely new atmosphere, one obviously more conducive to the presence of a First Lady. Certainly, a personally connected group of concerned citizens undertaking a project striving to insure that all Americans are taken care of is a far more acceptable involvement for a traditional First Lady than is leading a policy committee to construct a massive overhaul of one of America's biggest industries. At the same time, however, creating a friendly atmosphere is not necessarily the most conducive to productive policy presentation by a serious policy maker. It implies that the issue is less pressing and the presentation less professional than something proposed by an expert in a strictly professional setting.

After thanking and greeting the members, Clinton continues to frame the testimony in a format quite different than the average Ways and Means hearing where an expert comes before the committee to be grilled on the details and fiscal logistics of a

⁷⁵ Johnson and Broder. P. 183.

given proposal. Immediately, Clinton unambiguously declares her status as a non-expert. "During the past months, as I have worked to educate myself about the problems facing our nation and facing American citizens about health care, I have learned a great deal." Almost as a disclaimer, or an intentional act of modesty, Clinton establishes herself as an outsider to the health care profession. While distancing herself from expert categorization, Clinton tries to avoid undermining her own credibility by stressing how much she has learned in this short period. Clinton presents herself to the committee as recently self-educated outsider whose responsibility it is to facilitate an improvement of the health care system. Stopping at no ends to insure that she is not mistaken for a policy wonk or an interest group representative, Clinton presents herself to the committee as simply a concerned citizen who has happened upon the responsibility of overhauling the nation's health care system.

In explaining how she has come to assume this massive responsibility, Clinton offers the official reason of appointment, but continues to confess the true motivating factor behind her official position and her passion for insuring quality accessible coverage for the nation. In the now famous sound bite, Clinton reveals the fuel that drives her passion: "But more importantly for me, I'm here as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman. I'm here as an American citizen concerned about the health of her family and the health of her nation." Presenting herself first and foremost as "a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman," Clinton distances herself even further from the realm of expert-style policy proposing and enters the realm of the emotional, the nurturing, and the personal. Through this statement, Clinton acknowledges the boundaries imposed by her position as First Lady and attempts to use them to her advantage. Johnson and Broder

praised Clinton for her strategic self-identification in that it enabled the identification of all women with her. "Introducing herself in her opening words as 'a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman,' she also consciously appealed to all women, seeking to undercut the tensions that exist between America's homemakers and its career women. It was a bravura performance."⁷⁶ Johnson and Broder assessment of Clinton's set-up remarks, however flattering, fails to recognize the true "bravura" of her performance: her ability to justify the presence of the private in the realm of the public.

Rather than rejecting her role as First Lady in en lieu of an exclusively professional policy-maker, Clinton's approach attempts to embrace the First Lady's role by incorporating it into the policy-making arena. By embracing the First Lady role, Clinton avoids coming across as a harsh, power-hungry policy wonk. Through the qualification of her position within the family, Clinton highlights the importance of such legislation to the family, and thus to some degree legitimates the First Lady's role as policy-maker. Clinton converts the position of a policy-maker into a concerned mother and wife as protecting the best interest of the health of the nation. The traditionally private feminine sphere (of the family and of nurturing) is brought into the public political sphere through the policy-maker's declaration that her position as wife and mother is paramount.

Clinton tries to minimize her clear defiance of historical precedent for a First Lady by entering the policy-making field as "a mother, a wife, a daughter," not as a policy maker, thus casting policy-making merely as an extension of her role as a family-oriented woman. Given the national importance of health care and the major overhaul its

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 183.

reform requires, its future must rest in the hands of a highly competent professional policy maker. Clinton's attempt to bring the role of the First Lady into that of health care policy maker prevents her from presenting herself as the most competent expert possible. Clinton prioritizes proving her status as a concerned mother above establishing herself as a qualified expert capable of this daunting task.

After establishing who she comes as, Clinton moves on to appeal for support of the health care proposal. Throughout her appeal, both subtly and overtly, Clinton continually returns to her position within the reform equation. "Like so many Americans, I have seen first-hand the strengths of our health care system as well as its frailties," she assures the committee members. Clinton speaks not as a distanced expert or professional in the field, but as one of many everyday citizens suffering from ills of a troubled health care system. Clinton continuously works to bridge the gap between herself (as a First Lady and a witness) and committee members (as congresspeople and inquisitors). The major strategy evoked in this process is identification with the American people. The prospects for the health care proposal greatly increases if Clinton can persuade the members that it is indeed best for the people and what the people want.

Clinton emphasizes personal experience as a common point of understanding that she shares with the people whose interests she tries to represent. Repeated reference to the personal forces her audience to view her as someone with a personal investment in, and understanding, of the issue much like a caring and understanding mother. Clinton's own experiences supplement the experiences of others who have shared with her throughout her self-education process. The connection Clinton has made with people solidifies her position as a representative of the people, not a presidential appointee, and

not a expert policy maker. Her knowledge comes from both her own personal experience and from the shared personal experience of others. "I know from my own experiences and from the conversations I've been privileged to have with thousands of our fellow citizens across this country that something is wrong with our health care system and that it needs to be fixed." The dialogue Clinton has established with the citizens demonstrates a relationship of trust and connection. Clinton comes before the committee as a trusted friend and representative of the national community. Her strategy of presentation, and also of justification, is the telling of stories: an emotional appeal to a common interest rather than a rational appeal to numerical analysis.

While Clinton alludes to a shared personal experience, she admits that in fact no singular experience exists. "Each of us brings our own personal perspective to this issue," she assures the committee. Regardless of the diversity of experience, the focus on the personal distracts from the highly political aspects of health care reform. She approaches the political from a personal angle, attempting to fuse the private and public spheres. If the issue is indeed a personal private one, then the First Lady as acting head of reform seems less controversial and more natural. The personalization of the health care issue naturalizes the casting of the First Lady as head of the task force. Yet, this personalization, while easily digestible, distracts from substantive policy justification. By and large, quality health care is a universal-valued good. The question becomes how best to achieve it. In the policy stage, health care is a political and professional issues more than a personal or maternal. The traditional First Lady can quite successfully muster support for the issue relying on personal, emotional appeals, yet she might not as successfully be able to rely on the same appeals to construct and sell policy.

At the same time Clinton works to naturalize her position, she also attempts to distance herself from the power-wielding post that she holds as a presidential appointee for a major policy initiative. Throughout her speech Clinton makes it explicitly clear that she comes as a spokesperson for what is unmistakably the president's proposal. When addressing actual policy initiative Clinton always cites the president as the actor. Introducing the objective of the task force, Clinton explains, "... that when the president set up the health care task force and began this journey, he was committed to a simple principle: to build on what works in our current system and to fix what is broken." It is not only the president's task force, but also the president's moral and institutional framework that Clinton brings before the committee. She establishes this early on and reiterates it throughout. She refers to the proposal as "the president's plan" and remains loyal to the fact that "... the president will insist on certain overriding principles. . ." and those principles shape the plan. Clinton distances herself from the policy making position by crediting her husband with the plan as she assumes the role of its presenter.

By repeatedly referring to "the president" as the true author of the plan, Clinton is able to cast herself in the role of the supportive First Lady. She calls attention away from her own initiative and projects it onto her husband. That ownership and action remain within the hands of the President serves to ease apprehensions about undue policy power in the hands of the First Lady. If she can successfully downplay her own involvement in health care reform, such that she comes across as a supporter and not an initiator, then her role as the task force head does not stray too far from the role of the traditional First Lady. This, however, is a very delicate balancing act, for if Clinton distances herself too much from her policy making role, then she runs the risk of undermining her position as

head of the task force. A successful policy maker must sway committee members both of the quality of the policy and the competence of its maker. Similar to her strategy of downplaying her expertise and professionalism, distancing herself from policy action, detracts attention away from the novelty and controversy of a policy-forming First Lady. Ideally for Clinton, both as the First Lady and as head of the task force, curiosity and attention will focus on the policy itself not on her political or intellectual role in its development.

Clinton, however, does not remove herself entirely from the policy-formation process and its presentation. Indeed, her role is quite visible in the motivation for and understanding of the health care issue on a personal level. Her own role, as presented in her speech, creates an atmosphere of shared personal experience and compassionate understanding. She uses her various roles to demonstrate her understanding of the problems posed by the existing system and her identification with the American people. "I know about the tragedies of hard-working families. . ." she assures her audience. It is only through the sharing of her own experiences that she can persuade the depth of her understanding.

As a mother, I can understand the feelings of helplessness that must come when a parent can't afford a vaccination. . . As a wife, I can imagine the fear that grips a couple whose health insurance vanishes because of a lost job. . . I can see, as a sister, the inequities and inconsistencies of a health care system that offers widely-varying coverage. . . And as a daughter, I can appreciate the suffering that comes when a parent's treatment is determined as much by bureaucratic rules and regulation as by a doctor's expertise. And as a woman who has spent many years in the work force, I can empathize with those who labor for a lifetime and still cannot be assured they will always have health coverage.

Each of the roles in which Clinton casts herself are unmistakably feminine. Her audience is constantly reminded of her gender. As Clinton downplays her policy-making role, she

simultaneously emphasizes her feminine roles. Of all of the possible roles Clinton could use to demonstrate her understanding of the health care system, that she draws upon her exclusively feminine ones differentiates her from the average policy maker and congressional witness. As First Lady, these are the roles traditionally associated with her. Clinton embraces, rather than rejects, these in her attempt to sell policy. She cites her private roles as a mother and daughter, rather than her professional role as a policy maker, as her credentials. Clinton embraces the associations with a First Lady (and with women in general) that traditionally kept women in the private sphere and uses them as her doorway to the public sphere. This maternal, personal approach to policy making functions to bridge the existing gap between policy action and a First Lady.

Thus, Clinton gives the health care reform agenda a personal touch, one which understands and has experienced the problems encountered under the existing system. Clinton's strategy is one of universalization. The problems she illustrates, experienced by herself and others, are ones that speak to a broad enough audience as to incorporate virtually everyone. Dissatisfaction with the health care system at some level is a universally shared experience. The greatest impetus for change is grand scale dissatisfaction if it can be mobilized. Thus by evoking the rhetoric of universal discontent (particularly at the personal level), Clinton can espouse a type of communal unity for change. "If we put ourselves in the position of people around our country who face these issues every day," she offers, ". . . then we know when we talk about security, it is not about security for someone else; it is about security for all of us." Her strategy for communal mobilization is presented through a maternal concern for the good of the people.

She tells the committee that it is the people upon which her research is based. She comes before the committee, not only as a spokesperson for the president's plan, but also as a spokesperson for the people. "I've had a rare opportunity to meet with literally thousands of Americans across our country," she reports. It is their stories she relays and the common experiences among them. Her voice of authority blurs with the tales of the citizens. Clinton's strategy of story telling grants her more credibility, for her words appear to come from the people, not her own opinions. Further, Clinton tries to stress her hands on approach to policy making such that it appears to develop from the bottom up, working to avoid characterization as a top down policy implementer. Countering stereotypes of a distant member of the executive branch, Clinton appeals to a populist approach to policy reform including all those who it will effect in its formation.

This populist appeal runs throughout Clinton's speech, as she emphasizes the direct effect that the proposed legislation will have on people's lives, and their demonstrated desire for it.

The president's plan is not the product of any one person's work, nor even of the group that he asked to do it. It is literally the product of the work of thousands of people who shared their ideas, their research, and their personal experiences and time with us. Their overriding message to all of us is that Americans can not wait for health care reform.

Clinton simultaneously presents herself as the voice of the nation and a distant policy-maker. Interestingly enough, Clinton also distances the task force itself from the drafting of the proposal. She solicits no credit in the reform initiative and grants no credit to policy makers. Her rhetoric constructs the health care reform proposal as a bill strictly by the people and for the people.

In her concluding statement, Clinton offers the President's plan as the way for government to prove itself to the American people. According to Clinton's rhetoric, the proposal is the result of a collaborative effort between the people and their representatives that will ultimately benefit all. "This is the chance for the Congress, this is the chance for all of us to make a difference for every American no matter how rich or how poor, whether employed or not, whether living in the country or the city." Cast in these terms, Clinton presents the proposal as more than an answer to improved health care, but also a unifying factor between the government and the people whose interests it represents and between an exceptionally diverse citizenry. Clinton assumes a neutral role, of sorts, mediating between government and the people. This nurturing mediation appeals to emotional sensibility in a non-threatening manner. Avoiding a didactic approach entirely, Clinton speaks from a traditionally feminine concern for well being that enables her to present policy without confrontation or aggression.

Clinton's introductory speech offers an interesting balance of self-distance and self-insertion. Clinton distances herself from the policy-making role entirely. She claims no credit for the plan (it is "the President's plan") and reveals no vested self-interest (only in "every American"). She stops short of removing herself completely from the policy-formation process by playing the role of the understanding ear. Clinton presents her major role in the process as the traveling ear absorbing American experiences, the experiences that will ultimately form policy objectives. "I've sat in living rooms talking to farm families in Iowa. . . I've sat in hospital waiting rooms talking to doctors, nurses, pharmacists." The kind of policy-maker that Clinton paints herself as is not one isolated in a Washington office nor an academic institution, but one that sits down and connects

with people in their own homes. This ideal type of policy-maker makes the time and has the interest to learn about what type of policy will provide tangible and immediate benefits to the people. In addition, Clinton more overtly inserts her personal role through the sharing of her own experiences as a wife and a daughter. While she distances herself from her role as policy maker, she calls attention to her more feminine private roles. The strategized role presentation coincides more with the role of the traditional First Lady than it does a presidential appointed policy maker.

Clinton cautiously distances herself from the policy-making role and counters the possible misinterpretation of her as an expert. She speaks exclusively from experience and stories, relying on the personal and the emotional not necessarily the rational or the fiscally-minded. A admirable speech for mustering support from citizens for an established piece of legislation, however, Clinton's objective is to sway the House Ways and Means committee towards an incredibly complicated and politically controversial proposal. An emotional appeal will most likely solicit sympathies, but not necessarily the much needed political support and advocacy. Clinton demonstrates her consciousness of this reality in the question and answer period where she trades in her rhetorical style of "a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman" in exchange for a more authoritative expert style. The question and answer period allows members of the committee to question Clinton on the plan itself and challenge her with whatever short comings they may see. Questions posed by the Ways and Means committee pertained primarily to cost-based analysis, ones not easily addressed by personal or emotional appeal.

The committee posed 34 questions to Clinton (each from a different representative) and she utilized exclusively authoritative rhetoric to respond to every one.

The rhetoric Clinton uses during the question period matches perfectly with what Sullivan and Turner have described as "authoritative rhetoric": an objective, distanced style that relies on facts, statistics, cost analysis, and expert opinion.⁷⁷ A complete departure from her introductory remarks, Clinton's approach to the questions establishes her policy making position as paramount. Such a drastic change in her roles splits Clinton's presentation into two distinct parts: one which attempts to distance her from a policy making role and another which embraces it.

Gone are her references to the personal, or appeals to the shared American hardship, in their place Clinton relies upon statistics to provide tangible solutions to quantifiable problems. Clinton demonstrates through her appeals to reason that she is indeed a very competent policy maker. Through the use of numbers Clinton demonstrates her mastery of the fiscal implications of her plan. Challenged by Representative Shaw regarding a potential funding shortfall if \$200 billion Medicare cuts are not passed, Clinton responds in a detached, correcting manner of numbers.

Well, Mr. Shaw, let me start by saying we project \$124 billion in cuts over seven years, not \$200 billion in Medicare. . . We are talking about beginning to reduce the rate of increase in Medicare of \$124 billion, which would bring us down from about 11 percent increase annually to about 6 or 7 percent increase annually.

Her response rests not on personal experience, or even that of others, but rather on specific knowledge only accessible to an expert in the field. Clinton offers no apologies or explanations for her clear mastery of the material, rather she simply presents the facts as questions are posed.

The purely policy-oriented expert who responds to questions appears almost entirely disconnected from the nurturing mediator between the government and the

⁷⁷ Sullivan and Turner. P. 77.

people that introduced the testimony. Clinton's authoritative rhetoric is removed from the personable, easily-accessible style of her introductory remarks to such a degree that at times simply understanding what she is attempting to clarify becomes as arduous task.

Now, in order for us to move from the kind of system we've had, which has basically been a blank-check system, without any kind of effort to rein in costs in any reasonable way over time to where you and I both want to get, which is high-quality providers competing on the basis of quality and price and not necessarily the kind of continuing micromanagement, overregulated approach that we have seen that does not control costs but continues to reward inefficiency, we believe that the premium cap provides a balance between the micromanagement and overregulation we do want to eliminate from the system in order to simplify it, and the danger that in the absence of some kind of budget targets, we will continue to have a system that is out of control, that pushes on political levers instead of competitive ones.

In an attempt to persuade the committee of the merits of the proposal, Clinton employs detached, autonomous reason over emotional appeals.

In the aftermath of the testimony, President Clinton's pollster, Stan Greenberg, said of Clinton's style: "It's just the right combination of --I hate to say this-- a woman's touch with a real mastery of the policy."⁷⁸ The combination of feminine rhetoric and expert rhetoric reflects Clinton's dual role as both First Lady and policy-maker. She manages to fuse her two roles through her rhetorical strategy. However, this fusion comes across more as a cut-and-paste job than a thorough reconciliation. Her clear use of the "authoritative rhetoric" juxtaposed to the rhetoric used in her introductory remarks confuses the identity of the deliverer. Clinton seems to cast herself in polarized forms. On the one hand, she comes as "a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman," relying on shared personal experience and empathy to convey her argument. On the other, she comes as an expert policy maker fluent in the language of health care policy, supporting

her initiative with numerical support and reasoned justification. The two approaches never seem to meet. One exists in the introduction, the other in the question and answer forum. More a Jeckyl and Hyde switch than a delicate balance, Clinton traps herself into classification as one extreme role or the other.

She does, however, manage to successfully fulfill both of her roles. Her approach to her own policy presentation appears to rest on the presumption that as long as she adequately frames the discussion as a traditional First Lady would, then she is free to assume the policy making position, with little further regard to her role as First Lady. Appeasing the traditional formalities that accompany a First Lady, Clinton can proceed to the business of the day. While perhaps seemingly fragmented, Clinton's testimony was received with great praise by the committee members, who were obviously impressed with Clinton's mastery of the subject. Perhaps too impressed even, as Chairman Rostenkowski concluded the testimony with the well-intended praise:

I think in the very near future the president will be known as your husband. Who's that fellow? That's Hillary's husband. With the outstanding job that you've done here, my compliments to you, my compliments to the President of the United States for addressing this problem, and I hope that by the end of this Congress it will be on the president's desk, you standing at his side, for signature.

Clearly, Clinton's initial attempt at distancing herself from the policy and shying away from credit was not entirely successful. While her introductory remarks spoke to the credit of others and downplayed her role, her answer period overrode them, with the demonstration of her blatant policy-making role. Thus, while Clinton attempts to simultaneously fill both of her roles, she seems only able to handle one at a time. Both roles are successfully fulfilled, but not so successfully intertwined into one

⁷⁸ Ifill, G. "Role in Health Expands Hillary Clinton's Power." *New York Times*. September 22, 1993. P.

comprehensive role. She is the First Lady. She is a policy-maker. She is not a policy-making First Lady.

III) MEDIA ANALYSIS

The media coverage of Clinton's testimony is relatively extensive and provides an interesting indicator of response both to Clinton's role as a policy maker and to the testimony itself. Not surprisingly, the media focuses on Clinton's role(s) and the novelty of her position while neglecting to report on the policy itself. Coverage of Clinton's congressional testimony confirms theories of political media coverage asserting the media's tendency to report sensational situations rather than substantive issues. It illustrates Lippmann's theory that the news deems singular, tangible events and not the substantive issues behind them newsworthy. As a policy-making First Lady, Clinton is packaged and sold to the public as a "consumer good,"⁷⁹ while the policy she produces is entirely overlooked. Similarly, by extensively reporting Clinton's testimony while neglecting the policy, media coverage affirms Patterson's theory that "Policy issues are rooted in social conditions, which are harder to enliven than events."⁸⁰ The issue of health care proves a difficult one to adequately report, while Clinton's novel role as policy maker makes for an ideal subject of consumption.

Thus, that the media reports on the circumstance surrounding health care proposal rather than the issue itself, is less an indication of a low level of interest in Clinton's policy per se, but rather an indication of what the media deems "news worthy." The

A24.

⁷⁹ Bennett. P. 26.

⁸⁰ Patterson. Out of Order. P. 62.

media tends to focus on the role that Clinton plays, the power she wields, the strategies she exercises, and the novelty of her position. Media coverage generates attention around Clinton herself and not the policy. James Fallows has identified the media's tendency to report more scandalous issues in the face of ones with true, pressing substantive.

"[Scandals] have come to serve as a distraction machine, systematically diverting attention to a spectacle whenever the political system threatens to deal with an important but dull-seeming question affecting the way people actually live."⁸¹ The scandalous situation that cast a First Lady as policy maker proved far more engaging for the media than the dry real-life issues of health care. As First Lady and as policy maker, Clinton (not her policy) proves a challenging, yet engaging, subject for media coverage.

A total of 39 articles mention Clinton's name in the one month period around her congressional testimony, from September 15 to October 15, 1993. Seven of the 39 articles were omitted from the pool, because they did not constitute substantive articles, leaving a remaining 32. Of the 32 articles, twenty mentioned Clinton while 12 focused on her. That twelve articles focused exclusively on her attests to the intensity of media interest with Clinton's involvement in policy formation. More generally, this is a notably large number of articles to focus on a First Lady in a one month period. In a random sample of *New York Times* coverage of Barbara Bush in two one month periods, each month only produced four articles mentioning her.⁸² As could be expected, the coverage of Clinton during the health care testimony is substantially greater than typical coverage of a First Lady. Similarly, though not as dramatically, health care reform received a

⁸¹ Fallows. P. 131.

considerable amount of media coverage relative to other policy initiatives. Twenty of 32 articles mentioning Clinton do so with reference to health care reform efforts. While undeniably very different, the balance budget bill is the closest analogous piece of legislation, in terms of impact and importance, simply as a comparative gauge. In the one month period around the signing of the budget agreement the *New York Times* produced 15 articles that mentioned both President Clinton and the balance budget.⁸³ Given that this was a major piece of passed legislation sponsored by the President himself, one might expect for it to receive far more coverage than the health care proposal. That they received a comparable amount of coverage attests to a high level of visibility and interest in the health care initiative.

In general, the focus of the articles concentrates heavily on Clinton's role as a policy-maker and less on her role as the First Lady. The focus of this reporting is very much in keeping with Lippmann's and Bennett's theory of "easy interest" and "consumer good," respectively. A deliberate defiance of traditional duties by a First Lady surely proves more readily consumable than a compliant fulfillment of tradition. Thus the First Lady as policy-maker provides a much more interesting article angle than First Lady as social hostess or charitable spokesperson.

The media depicts Clinton's role in a three fold approach: as policy-maker, as traditional First Lady, and finally, as a politicized First Lady who combines public and private domains. As a policy-maker the media follows Clinton as she testifies before

⁸² Four articles with the name "Barbara Bush" appeared in the *New York Times* from January 1 to January 31, 1990, three of which were under 200 words. The time frame from November 1 to November 30, 1991, also produced four articles, again three of which were under 200 words.

⁸³ A *Lexus-Nexus* search of "Balance and Budget and Clinton" from July 15 to August 15, 1996, produced 15 articles.

Congress and even assesses her performance. In his article, "Hillary Clinton, on Capitol Hill, Wins Raves, if Not a Health Plan," Adam Clymer, acknowledges Clinton's achievement in her testimony:

So taken with her presentation were the members of the House Ways and Means Committee that they applauded as she left, a virtually unheard-of tribute. They were plainly impressed that she had handled the dozens of issues they raised with detail and conviction, and without notes from advisers.⁸⁴

For the most part, Clymer reports Clinton's presence as a policy-maker and not a First Lady. In this particular assessment, the media judges Clinton on her policy-making capabilities, or at least makes no acknowledgment otherwise. Determining how her role as First Lady influences assessment of her role as policy maker is virtually impossible to gauge.

In other articles, however, it is more than apparent how her position as First Lady influences the media coverage of her policy-making role. Often, the depiction of Clinton's role as First Lady accompanies that of her role as policy-maker. Attention paid to the more traditional aspects of Clinton remind the readership that Clinton is the First Lady who must be held to certain standards, emphasizing Clinton's position as a policy anomaly. In her editorial "First lady Takes Stage, Ending Era on the Hill," Maureen Dowd reported a First Lady's testimony, not a policy maker's: ". . . Mrs. Clinton testified in an emerald suit with crystal clarity, becoming the first First Lady to appear before Congress defending major legislation which she is helping to draft."⁸⁵ While covering

⁸⁴ Clymer, Adam. "Hillary Clinton, on Capitol Hill, Wins Raves, if Not a Health Plan." *New York Times*. September 29, 1993. P. A1.

⁸⁵ Dowd, Maureen. "First Lady Takes Stage, Ending Era on the Hill." *New York Times*. September 29, 1993. P. A18.

Clinton as policy maker, Dowd's concern lies more with her fulfillment of the expectations of a First Lady.

Other articles, some more explicitly than others, infer that Clinton's status as First Lady infringes upon her ability to successfully form policy. Adam Clymer, in his article "The Clinton Health Plan is Alive on Arrival," suggests that Clinton's status as First Lady impeded upon the political process by causing representatives to censor themselves in front of her. "At one end was Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, the number two House Republican, who insisted it was just good manners that kept the Republicans from attacking the First Lady."⁸⁶ Rekindling associations of the First Lady with a delicate sensibility, one too fragile to be exposed to the harness of political life, Gingrich (via Clymer) implies that the First Lady should be protected from harsh words suggesting that she does not constitute a suitable policy maker.

The media seems to have great difficulty reporting Clinton's role. There is no one clear-cut role to report and no one set of expectations that she must fulfill. Further there is no past precedent with which to follow. Indeed, the media and Clinton herself are navigating new terrain. Unlike Clinton, however, the media is more reluctant to leave behind the framework of traditional roles. In an attempt to remain faithful to traditional roles and respect their autonomy, the media tends to cast Clinton in extremes: either the traditional First Lady or the professional policy-maker. For the media, her direct entrance into the policy field, via the testimony, poses both a dilemma as to how to portray her and a delight as her novelty generates new and exciting things to report.

⁸⁶ Clymer, Adam. "The Clinton Health Plan is Alive on Arrival." *New York Times*. October 3, 1993. P. D3.

The media generates interest around Clinton's position by exploring the strategies that she evokes in balancing her two roles. The media is demonstrably intrigued with Clinton's strategic positioning, image construction, and her political negotiation of tradition and policy-making. How Clinton's role as First Lady affects her role as policy-maker constitutes a point of considerable concern. Further, stipulation on why Clinton occupies the policy-making role that she does poses an intriguing area of investigation. One hypothesis, posed by Thomas Friedman in his article "Selling a Health Proposal: Catchwords and Humility," posits her femininity as an attribute to a health care professional selling her wares. "Mrs. Clinton, in particular, will be featured by the Administration, because it is felt that she has very high credibility in general and because women tend to make most of the health care decisions for their families."⁸⁷ Friedman's analysis reflects a general media confusion over how to portray Clinton and her dual role. Why, many articles ponder, is the First Lady assuming such an uncharacteristically powerful role in her husband's administration? Friedman poses one answer, citing political strategizing and demographic targeting.

Clinton's strategic positioning and negotiation of her power relative to the President also proves a valuable source for media interest. Throughout the 1992 campaign, the scandalous presentation of a would-be First Lady overshadowing the president provided one angle of campaign coverage guaranteed to tantalize readership. For some, Clinton's involvement in the health care reform efforts fueled such anxieties and the media seized the reporting opportunity. Gwen Ifill's article "Role in Health Expands Hillary Clinton's Power" focuses exclusively on the strategy with which Clinton

⁸⁷ Friedman, Thomas. "Selling a Health Proposal: Catch words and Humility." *New York Times*.

exercises her power. "Now, even as President Clinton prepared to take over her role as the chief advocate for the Administration's plan, Mrs. Clinton is solidifying her position as the power beside, rather than behind, the throne." Ifill's interpretation of Clinton's role as policy-maker concludes a more public, outright declaration of a power previously exercised in more private domains.

Ifill goes further and insinuates that in addition to Clinton herself, the larger White House staff works to strategize a calculated presentation of Clinton that will dodge unwanted attention. "Almost no one believes that Mrs. Clinton will overshadow her husband if he is the chief spokesman for his plan. But White House officials seem aware that they can push a good thing too far, and they actively discourage the notion that Mrs. Clinton might be too powerful."⁸⁸ The media focus lies not with Clinton's policy or performance, but with her role as a potentially controversial figure -- a political figure whose calculated strategy of self-presentation is performed to minimize political risks. The representation characterizes Clinton as a highly political actor. Ifill's article maintains that once Clinton sufficiently softened her image, she could then proceed to assume a public position of power. "Her public image softened by Easter egg rolls on the South Lawn and sheltered by the prestige of the White House, the emotionless careerist of last year's Republican myth-making has emerged as a sympathetic First Lady and master of policy detail." According to the article, the "remarkable public relations transformation" Ifill observes ultimately enables Clinton to enter the policy-making arena. Ifill's article portrays Clinton as political liability of sorts, one that necessitates political strategizing in order to downplay her controversial status. Such strategizing

September 20, 1993. P. B6.

emphasizes the difficulties of Clinton's roles and assistance she needs to negotiate them. Though these implications, Ifill not only distracts from the policy itself, but also undermines Clinton as a political figure.

In addition to her strategy of approaching her roles, Clinton's strategy of presentation before Congress also proves a fruitful cite for media stipulation. Why Clinton acts the way she does, proves more interesting to the media than what she has done. While what she said during her testimony remains virtually unreported, numerous opinions emerge as to how she said it and why. Maureen Dowd, in particular, reports on Clinton's presentation strategy:

During the campaign, Mrs. Clinton was surprised to learn from polls that many Americans did not picture her in a maternal way and did not even know that she had a daughter. Today, she was careful to lace her testimony with personal references, beginning in the morning by telling the Ways and Means Committee that she was 'here as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman.'⁸⁹

In this one paragraph, Dowd touches upon most of the major themes of Clinton's media coverage: reference to a more controversial image of past, attention to the balance Clinton maintains between her two roles, and finally Clinton's strategy for both overcoming past challenges and negotiating her role as policy maker with that of First Lady. For the media, Clinton proves an interesting subject of examination. She is both controversial and a novel. She is both loved and hated. She is both a First Lady and a policy-maker. Indeed, the juxtapositions which Clinton embodies are what make her an intriguing figure. The more successfully the media can foster the perception of Clinton as interesting, the larger the readership they can entice. Again, confirming existing theories of the media's preference of intrigue over issue.

⁸⁸ Ifill.

Portraying Clinton as a navigator of uncharted territories is another way that the media excites attention around her. Contrasting Clinton with her predecessors is a common tool used by the media to draw attention to the novelty (and thus the news worthiness) of her policy-making position. History, the media points out, is in the making. Gwen Ifill most explicitly addresses this in her article on Clinton's power: "...But no previous First Lady has occupied center stage so aggressively or disarmed her critics more effectively. And with each success, her role has been expanded far beyond that of previous Presidents' wives."⁹⁰ Ifill implies a historical change in the role of the First Lady. Clinton is portrayed as a new type of First Lady, expanding the sphere of tradition.

The flip side, however, of this extended sphere is the heavy weight of responsibility and expectation. Rather than celebrating the novelty of Clinton's expanded role, Adam Clymer calls attention to the potential dangers of overstepping traditional boundaries as defiantly as Clinton has. "When Eleanor Roosevelt testified in 1940 and again in 1942 about conditions of migrants, and when Rosalynn Carter testified about the Government's mental health efforts in 1979, they were not carrying the central hope of their husband's Administrations, as Mrs. Clinton was today."⁹¹ At once, Clymer focuses on the divergence Clinton takes from the path of her predecessors and subtly cautions of the danger of such divergence. As Clymer frames it, Clinton's choices about her role do not effect her alone, but the entire Administration. Comparisons of Clinton to the First

⁸⁹ Dowd.

⁹⁰ Ifill.

⁹¹ Clymer. September 29, 1993.

Ladies before her marks a considerable contrast, one with both historical and political implications.

In addition to portraying Clinton as a novelty, the media tends to present her as a very public figure, one who attracts attention in extreme forms. She is on the one hand a celebrity and on the other a scandalous political liability. The extremes in which she is cast makes it confusing, at best, to form a synthesized media portrayal of her. Casting her as an interesting novelty to watch and analyze, the media perpetuates notions of Clinton as a celebrity. Given the extensive media coverage of her role in the health care reform, it comes as no surprise that she be perceived with celebrity stature. Adam Clymer cited numerous demonstrations of popular support for Clinton, including one instance where, "Students, and their elders, stayed as long as she would Friday night waiting to shake her hand or offer praise after she used a brown University stage for a television program on health care." Clymer offers an interpretation of such displays of attention: "Coming a week after her five hit appearances on Capitol Hill, perhaps these displays of popular attention might be put down to mere celebrity."⁹² Ifill makes a similar observation, but she uses examples extracted from popular culture. "Mrs. Clinton's office is fielding invitations from Jay Leno, Larry King and Dan Rather,"⁹³ Ifill observes. In addition to her status as a novelty First Lady, Clinton is also depicted as an anomaly policy-maker by her celebrity status. Rarely is such interest, let alone such following, demonstrated for a policy-maker.

⁹² Clymer, Adam. "In Campaign for the Health Care Plan, Hillary Clinton is the Top Candidate." *New York Times*. October 11, 1993. P. A12.

⁹³ Ifill.

Alas, no portrayal is completely one sided. While the media casts Clinton as a popular celebrity, it also makes frequent reference to her past position as a scandal-evoking political liability. References to past political difficulties, including "Having had her image problems with television...",⁹⁴ abound. No further explanation is offered implying a universal knowledge of Clinton's image problems. Media portraits also foster the assumption that, for the most part, those problems are of the past. A narrative of a drastic turn-around, accounts for this. Ifill provides an ideal example: "...Mrs. Clinton has completed a remarkable public relations transformation, turning the personal qualities that were considered political liabilities in the Presidential campaign into political assets now."⁹⁵ The simple narrative presents Clinton at the beginning of her husband's Administration (and the campaign leading up to it) as a scandalous, divisive figure who later transforms, through a strategy of political know-how, into a celebrity policy-maker and reinventor of the First Lady's role. The extremes of Clinton's portrait create a more interesting media figure than a complete person who struggles to simultaneously fulfill two different roles. Moreover, this dual figure is portrayed at the expense of policy reporting.

Essentially, media coverage of Clinton strives to portray her as an engaging media figure. Policy reporting is lost in favor of character reporting that paints Clinton as an interesting political machine. The media's negligence in reporting on actual policy fosters an evaluation of Clinton based entirely on elements independent of tangible work or professional accomplishments. For evaluating a traditional First Lady, reliance on

⁹⁴ Goodman, Walter. "Rating the Interviewers in Hillary Clinton's Blitz." *New York Times*. September 27, 1993. P. C16.

⁹⁵ Ifill.

appearances and actions at particular events serves as suitable criteria. Evaluating a policy-maker, however, depends more on policy accomplishments within the context of a larger issue. Thus because the media fails to examine actual policy, its portrayal of Clinton as policy-maker melds with that of the First Lady: both are grounded in surface appearances and subjective speculation.

The media portrays Clinton's image as both a First Lady and a policy-maker. This disjointed figure, however, according to media portrayal, is more a First Lady than a policy-maker. She is held to First Lady standards. The fact that she is a First Lady makes her policy-making role interesting. The image of Clinton is thus that of a First Lady who on occasion trades in her wedding band for a task force. That she is portrayed in such a disconnected manner facilitates an image of Clinton that struggles unsuccessfully to balance two different roles. The media's fascination with stipulation over calculated political strategy aids the perception of a struggling figure. Further, that Clinton has to strategize to successfully balance her roles implies that the two roles do not naturally belong together, that it is indeed only through a forced strategized union that the two can co-exist. Comparisons to past First Ladies reiterate this point and call attention to the novelty of Clinton. Her image is at once that of a pioneer and that of a deviant.

Finally, such extreme portrayals manifest through the depiction of Clinton as a political figure who is both a liability and a celebrity. Forming a cohesive image projected by the media is considerably difficult as she is cast in such extremes. Few things about Clinton's media image are clear: she is visible, she is a novelty, and she is divided. The media pays little attention to the testimony itself or the policy, just fleeting reference to it. Clearly, the subject priority is Clinton and her role. The media calls

attention to her in a way that makes it difficult to take her seriously as a policy-maker. In large part, this can be accounted for by the media's demonstrated attachment to portraying the traditional role of the First Lady. In reports of Clinton's congressional testimony coverage of complicated policy is wholly absent. That the media reports Clinton the policy maker in the format of First Lady coverage undermines Clinton's capabilities as a policy maker by evading evaluations of the policy itself in favor of her intriguing and novel role.

IV) CONCLUSION

Media's coverage of Clinton's congressional testimony fails to coincide with her own self-presentation. Coverage ignores Clinton's attempts to distance herself from policy while embracing the role of the traditional First Lady, and instead casts her solely as a policy maker and emphasizes the novelty of her position. Moreover, coverage disregards Clinton's impressive demonstration of her policy making competence, demonstrated during the question period. The media presents Clinton as an out of place policy maker and provides no evidence for evaluating her on any grounds other than her seemingly out of context position. The discrepancy between Clinton's self-presentation and media's portrayal of her is most evidently visible in the presentation (or lack there of) of actual policy. As any congressional witness would, Clinton devoted the majority of her testimony to policy details. Her lengthy question and answer period extensively covered both practical and fiscal logistics of the proposed reform. Given the complexity of the proposal, a good deal of time was necessarily devoted to insuring the committee's comprehension of the plan. Quite to the contrary, media coverage of Clinton's testimony

avoided policy discussion entirely. The media's neglect of policy coverage is not, however, unique to Clinton. Documented media analysis illustrates the media's tendency to report the more sensational events around an issue as opposed to the issue itself, which poses a more complex challenge than the media is willing to take on.⁹⁶ In keeping with tradition, media coverage completely overlooked the policy element of the health care reform effort. The media did not review or evaluate the proposal even in the broadest of terms.

Through her testimony, particularly the question and answer period, Clinton proved her legitimacy as an educated and professional policy-maker. The media, however, refused to report her as such. Her demonstrated policy strengths went unreported, in favor of less-informative coverage of a First Lady's negotiation of her role as policy-maker. The public was never given a chance to evaluate the proposed policy nor, for that matter, Clinton as a policy-maker. This created a major problem for the passage of the legislation, which the majority of the American public could not evaluate, or much less understand. More immediately, it created an obstacle for Clinton's credibility as a policy-maker. The media's failure to report Clinton as a policy-maker, and its subsequent neglect of the policy itself, worked to confirm suspicion that Clinton was a policy-maker not based on her own credentials and capabilities, but rather on her relationship to her husband. The media never gave the public reason to believe otherwise. While speculation on how a better informed public would have judged Clinton as a policy-maker is unproductive, it certainly calls attention to the media's discriminating coverage.

⁹⁶ See Lippmann, Bennett, and Fallows.

In addition to avoiding policy coverage, the media's other primary approach to reporting Clinton was to present her as a novelty. References to her as the "first First Lady" or "the only First Lady" abound. Clinton's status as a novelty excites interest and an aura of historical importance, two much-coveted qualities of a media subject. It is thus, despite tradition, suspicious that the media would not report Clinton's impressive and novel question and answer period. Surely, no First Lady before her had ever wowed a congressional committee so legitimately with comprehensive knowledge of and insight into an incredibly complex system such as health care. Her ability to reply thoughtfully and thoroughly, without reference to notes or advisors, was indeed a novel feat. This level of novelty, despite how great, could not overcome media apathy to reporting issues of substance. Reporting Clinton's question and answer period would require policy discussion deemed too complex for the readership. Thus, even though it offered the reward of added novelty, the media completely avoided policy coverage.

The media's approach to Clinton is primarily to report her as a First Lady. Even within the context of a congressional testimony, Clinton is covered as a First Lady, a First Lady trying her hand at policy making. In the media's eye, Clinton's role as policy-maker takes a clear second seat to her role as First Lady, for the novelty of such a position entices intrigue. Clinton's demonstrated efforts in her testimony to distance herself from the policy making role prove far less intriguing for the media which opts not to report them. Her opening remarks work to personalize her role in the reform efforts ("...I'm here as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a woman"), while simultaneously distancing herself from the pro-active position she credits to her husband ("...the President's plan..."). Her attempt to downplay her role in policy formation finds no place in media coverage,

which unequivocally associates her as the mastermind of the policy initiative. Similarly, Clinton's presentation of herself as the every-woman, neither policy maker nor First Lady, simply an American struggling under the current system ("Like so many Americans, I have seen first-hand the strengths of our health care system as well as its frailties") goes ignored by the media. She is repeatedly depicted as a policy implementer working from above, not from the ground up. Clinton's attempt at strategic positioning remain entirely overlooked by a media that prefers to present her within the confines of preconceived notions of what she should be as First Lady and who she is as a policy-maker. Admittedly, such notions are formed completely divorced from any policy she may produce. A novel First Lady venturing to uncharted terrain proves far more engaging subject of media coverage than policy details.

Clearly, Clinton's efforts to shape her own image did not translate through the media. Clinton seems to have underestimated America's (and the media's) attachment to tradition. The divided state of her testimony presented her as a personally connected, feminine, inexperienced policy-maker in her introductory remarks and then shifted dramatically in the question and answer period to an unabashed policy expert. This dual self-presentation suggests that Clinton's strategy allowed for candid expression of a policy professional only when prefaced by a feminine disclaimer of sorts. That she could fulfill her role as First Lady and as a woman in her introductory remarks freed her from any further constraints is an apparent fallacy. Her opening remarks can be interpreted as an attempt to appease tradition before proceeding to the true business at hand. The media did not buy it. No fulfillment of tradition can disband all traditional expectations.

Clinton's incongruous presentation of herself as First Lady, followed in stark contrast by herself as policy-maker, aided the media in its one-dimensional portrayal of her. Throughout her introductory remarks, Clinton distances herself from the role of the policy-maker and embraces characteristics of the feminine private role (by sharing her experiences as a wife and mother) coinciding with that of the First Lady. This type of presentation surely fosters the media's coverage of her as a First Lady, and not as a policy-maker. The construction of her testimony allowed the media to focus exclusively on her framing remarks (that establish her as First Lady) and to overlook the question period where she reveals herself as a policy-maker. Perhaps if Clinton had better fused her two roles, in both the beginning remarks and the response period, it would have been more difficult for the media to ignore policy aspects completely. For more complementary coverage, Clinton will have to present herself as more of a complete person, rather than two distinctly functioning personas. Through her speech, Clinton constructs herself as two separate identities, in turn, she has enabled the media to decide which identity to portray, rather than insisting on the portrayal of both.

Clinton defied tradition by assuming an overt policy making position. By imposing traditional First Lady attributes into her role as policy maker, Clinton attempted to subtly justify and ease the burden of her defiance. Her attempt, however, produced a disjointed figure: first a First Lady and then a policy maker. Her disjointed self-presentation enabled the media to more easily cover her strictly as a policy maker, but to apply First Lady evaluation tools in doing so. The disjunction between Clinton's presentation and media's coverage is further exacerbated by the media's tendency to report issues of intrigue over issues of policy. The media reported the novelty of Clinton

in lieu of more substantive policy coverage to better entice a consuming readership. The media prevented the public from evaluating Clinton the policy maker on actual policy information, consequently denying her the possibility of proving her capabilities to the public. Clearly, to be accepted as a policy maker (and to be judged on her policy making) Clinton must coax the media into a more accurate portrayal of her self-presentation. Stereotypes of media coverage prevailed, as Clinton unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the media to work with in conjunction with her own self-presentation. Ultimately, a demonstrated attachment to tradition, including an established approach to reporting a First Lady, proved incompatible with a policy making First Lady. In order to broaden the role of First Lady, Clinton will have to better negotiate a comprehensive balance of her two roles, thus enabling her to cater both to tradition and to the media.

CHAPTER FOUR

WELFARE REFORM BILL:

TRADITION DENIED

I) CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

"I have been so used to freedom of sentiment that I know not how to place so many guards about me, as will be indispensable, to look at every word before I utter it, and to impose a silence upon myself, when I long to talk."

-Abigail Adams⁹⁷

On February 20, 1796, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband President Adams expressing her concerns over one of her biggest fears: publicly speaking her mind. Despite her husband's occupation of the highest seat in public office, Adams herself harbored quite a contempt for public life. When a friend referred to the First Ladyship as a "splendid misery," Adams confessed, "She was not far from the truth."⁹⁸ For, it was her very public position that required her to "impose a silence" upon herself. In the late eighteenth century, as a woman, let alone a First Lady, Adams' domain was unquestionably relegated to the private sphere. Any deviation from the rigidly divided gendered spheres would certainly result in controversy. Two hundred years later, in 1996, fearing the same socially- and politically- imposed restrictions, Hillary Clinton underwent analogous self-censorship. Through Clinton's reaction to the passage of the welfare

⁹⁷ Adams Papers. Massachusetts Historical Society. February 29, 1786. As quoted in Anthony. p. 61.

⁹⁸ Whitney, Jane. Abigail Adams Boston: Little, Brown. 1947. p. 264. As quoted in Anthony. p. 60.

reform bill, one can almost hear her uttering the lamenting words of Adams, remembering "to impose a silence upon myself, when I long to talk."

Clinton's past professional involvements with, and her demonstrated personal commitment to, impoverished children implies a vested interest in insuring comprehensive and fair welfare reform. Throughout her professional life, Clinton has worked as a staunch advocate for children, insisting that poor children should have access to similar opportunities as their better-endowed peers. Her passion and expertise in the area suggest that even if she did not occupy a formal role in the welfare reform effort, that certainly she would have an opinion to contribute. Both Clinton's own speeches and the media's coverage of her reaction to the passage of the welfare reform bill prove otherwise. Before examining the speeches and coverage, and drawing explanatory conclusions, the context in which this occurred must be considered.

The Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 surfaced just months before the presidential election, and weeks before both parties' national conventions. The political climate at the time was saturated with election anxieties, hopes, and of course, strategies. After a major conservative tide swept the 1994 congressional election, the Democratic party was forced to re-examine its strategy if it hoped to fair better in the 1996 election. Adopting a more centrist position than the traditional liberal stance of his party, the President aimed to target an increasingly moderate voting body. *The Choice*, an expose of the 1996 presidential campaign told by journalist Bob Woodward, posits that the President embraced successful Republican issues as a strategy to court votes, enabling him to later address "his" issues with greater success. "...Republicans from Reagan to Gingrich had essentially four issues that resonated with voters: taxes, crime, welfare and

the federal budget. Clinton had to take these issues off the table..."⁹⁹ Welfare was one of the issues that the President could use to curry favor with the centrist voter. Furthermore, in the 1992 campaign, he had promised to "end welfare as we know it."¹⁰⁰ Thus, a successful reform of the welfare system could theoretically win much-coveted moderate votes and simultaneously prove to the public that the President kept his promises.

Ideally, such political motivations should not constitute the impetus for dramatic structural readjustment of the welfare system, for the potential for compromised values is too great. Some stipulation posits that the drive for reelection abetted the drive for welfare reform, which ultimately could only be accomplished with great compromise. While welfare reform was achieved, the bill itself was an admittedly flawed piece of legislation. In his speech announcing the welfare reform bill, the President conceded with criticisms of the bill. "The legislation is, however, far from perfect. There are parts of it that are wrong..."¹⁰¹ From the more liberal perspective, the "far from perfect" elements to which the President alluded, included ending the sixty-year welfare entitlement, steep cuts in food stamps, and rigid time limits on benefits. Because of these flaws, the signing of the welfare bill was a particularly controversial act within the Democratic party, and within the Administration. An article in the *New York Times* observed (as though a truism): "But if he signs the bill that he will receive in the next few days, he will alienate many of his most loyal constituents within the liberal wing of the Democratic Party."¹⁰² As a further demonstration of the controversial position of the bill, members of the

⁹⁹ Woodward, Bob. *The Choice*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. P. 26.

¹⁰⁰ Text of President Clinton's Announcement on Welfare Legislation. *New York Times*. July 31, 1996. P. A24.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Clinton Administration resigned based on their inability to reconcile their personal moral stance with the legislation.¹⁰³

The controversial nature of the legislation and the seeming harshness with which it dealt with the poor would suggest that an advocate, like Clinton, would most certainly assert an opinion on the bill. While many people with like-minded opinions and similar professional histories voiced out-spoken opposition to the reform bill, Clinton remained notably absent from the discussion. The context in which the welfare reform was realized is imperative in exploring how and why Clinton “imposed a silence” upon herself.

II) SPEECH ANALYSIS

In keeping with Adams' self-imposed silence, Clinton did not deliver any speeches that addressed the welfare reform legislation. In the four month period around the signing of the bill (from June 1 to October 1, 1996), only two of Clinton's speeches made reference to welfare reform.¹⁰⁴ Clinton's lack of welfare-pertinent speeches, however, cannot be accredited to any shortage of speaking engagements. The welfare reform bill passed just weeks before the Democratic convention and in the midst of the heaviest campaigning period leading up to the November election. Due to the campaign season, Clinton's schedule was full of speaking engagements. Fortunately, for the purpose of this analysis, on two separate speaking occasions, Clinton was questioned directly about her

¹⁰² Pear, Robert. “Agreement Struck on Most Elements for Welfare Bill.” *New York Times*. July 29, 1996. P. A1.

¹⁰³ Peter Edelman, assistant secretary of Health and Human Services (and husband of president of the Children's Defense Fund Marian Wright Edelman) resigned along with “all of the top officials at H.H.S. who specialized in welfare.” (Drew, Elizabeth. *Whatever it Takes*. New York: Viking, 1997. P. 137.)

reaction to the legislation during a question and answer period. Her response to the questions provide the material with which to gauge Clinton's self-presented reaction to the legislation. Her silence in the matter, however, reveals more about her image presentation than any words spoken.

The two speeches that addressed welfare reform without direct prompting, did so only in passing. The typical format of Clinton's speeches during the 1996 campaign was to first remind the audience (in some variation) of the promises that the President made in 1992 to get elected, followed by a list of accomplishments that prove the fulfillment of his promises. The four-year overview strategy demonstrated Clinton's accomplishments and his credibility in fulfilling promises for a next term. Of all the campaign speeches she delivered, only two included welfare reform in the list of presidential contributions bettering American society. Interestingly enough, both mentions acknowledge, not the bill itself, but the President's efforts on welfare reform before the legislation as positive policy contributions. Clinton craftily directs the focus away from the actual legislation and its implications.

Clinton's first reference to welfare reform in the four month period appeared in a speech she delivered to the Communication Workers of America Convention in Detroit on June 10, 1996. Almost two months before the welfare bill became law, Clinton stresses the President's efforts leading up to the passage of the legislation. Clinton caters to her primarily working class audience by focusing on economic and employment security. She also relies heavily on a rhetoric fostering the Horatio-Alger-American-

¹⁰⁴ While in the First Lady's office, I was able to read through her speeches, of the given time period, available in her press office. Discovering that no one speech focused exclusively on the welfare reform bill, I sought to review all of the speeches that at least mentioned the bill. I was only able to locate two.

dream mentality of success earned through hard work. Clinton presents the four-year overview strategy, illustrating the President's accomplishments within a framework of "an ethic of responsibility and sacrifice." After highlighting some of the term's major achievements, including the Family and Medical Leave Act and other family-oriented legislative efforts, Clinton proceeds to address welfare reform.

And this President has fought hard for child support enforcement and for real welfare reform. While the Congress has been arguing, he's been granting waivers to states so that we can get on with the business of trying to reform the welfare system.

Clinton definitively establishes welfare reform as an important task for lawmakers to undertake. Not missing an opportunity for subtle partisan attack on the Republican Congress, Clinton juxtaposes her husband's action with a non-productive legislative body. Her praise of the President's welfare efforts seem to stem more from the fact that he is doing something, as opposed to what he is actually doing. Clinton merely glosses over welfare reform efforts, failing to explicitly outline their social benefits.¹⁰⁵

Clinton delivered the second speech mentioning welfare reform at the University of Texas at Austin, Public Strategies Incorporated Conference, on September 5, 1996. Addressing an audience comprised primarily of students, Clinton uses her four-year overview format with a focus on two presidential strategies: "Number one --provide opportunity for all." and "Number two --by asking responsibility from all of us." Before she embarks on her main focus (what the President has done to better higher education and make it more accessible), Clinton quickly runs through some of the term's other

¹⁰⁵ This is particularly apparent when compared to her review of other policy efforts in the same speech, for example Kennedy-Kassenbaum bill: "Twenty-five million Americans will be able to keep their health insurance because the Kennedy-Kassenbaum says you cannot lose your insurance if you're sick or change jobs."

accomplishments. When she comes to welfare reform, Clinton phrases the supposed accomplishment in interesting terms.

Even before he signed welfare reform, we were seeing progress because the President gave authority to states to start experimenting about moving people from welfare to work and there are nearly two million fewer people on welfare today than when my husband took the office of President.

Just as she did in the speech before the legislation was passed, Clinton focuses on the President's efforts independent of the legislation. As though to strategically distract from the legislation and its implications, Clinton focuses on the President's prior to the signing of the law. Reallocating welfare control from the national to the state level was the President's most substantial welfare reform effort preceding the 1996 bill. The mentioned "two million fewer" welfare recipients was also a result of earlier efforts, for the legislation had been passed just a month before the speech was presented, and had yet to be implemented. Given the drastic changes instigated by the welfare reform bill and its large political and practical implications, it seems almost inappropriate for Clinton to shift focus away from the legislation itself to reform efforts made before its passage. Framing her support of welfare efforts with the preface "Even before he signed welfare reform..." Clinton averts discussing the bill at all, let alone praising it, as she does with other passed bills.¹⁰⁶

The two times that Clinton mentions welfare reform in her speeches, she does so without actually referring to (and certainly not praising) the welfare reform act itself.

¹⁰⁶ Clinton both explains and praises other pieces of legislation in the same address, including the Family and Medical Leave Act which she explicitly supports: "That's why it is so important to have a President like my husband who understands that you can either support families in today's world or you can make it even tougher for them to balance all of the conflicts between time and money that every single family in America faces. I am very proud that as his first act as President, the President signed the Family and Medical Leave Act."

Even more notable is the multiple speeches where Clinton reviews her husband's term in office by listing the policy feats and makes no mention of the welfare reform. In her most visible appearance since the congressional testimony on health care reform, Clinton delivered an exceptionally high-profile address at the Democratic National Convention where she highlighted presidential accomplishments. The welfare reform bill found no place in her boasting acknowledgment of the term's achievements.

Similarly, speeches delivered to Emily's List Women Win '96 Rally and the Women's Caucus of the Democratic National Convention make no mention of welfare reform, despite their otherwise lengthy and comprehensive overview of Presidential accomplishments. Predictably so, mention of the welfare reform is absent in speeches presented more liberal groups, particularly liberal women's groups. The welfare bill was particularly unpopular with liberal-leaning groups, thus, Clinton's omission of such reference is most-probably a calculated maneuver intended to evade potential controversy. Both the Communication Workers of America and the University of Texas audience had relatively conservative (particularly fiscally so) leanings. Coming out in support of welfare reform was much more politically safe (even expected) in those climates. More liberal groups, like Emily's List, with whom Clinton can more easily identify and receive unrelenting support, would not be nearly as responsive or accepting. Every speech is catered to its audience, alluding to issues known to curry favor with particular groups. Selective audience appeals is particularly pronounced during election time when the goal is to mobilize all possible support bases. That welfare reform found its way into only two speeches reveals both the type of audience Clinton targets in speech appearances and her reluctance to call unnecessary attention to the welfare policy.

On two separate speaking engagements, Clinton was questioned directly about her reaction to the welfare reform bill, coercing her to address the issue she clearly preferred to circumvent. Each occasion required that Clinton confront the welfare reform legislation without a prepared speech. Given the spontaneity inherent in a question and answer format, Clinton's answers reveal a certain degree of candor absent in prepared speeches. At the Associated Press Managing Editors Association Annual Conference on September 18, Clinton was asked directly about her reaction to the legislation. The question was posed more specifically about the Clintons' ability to support the bill. "You have spoken often on the behalf of children however the changes in welfare law, appear to put children at risk; how do you and your husband reconcile this?" The question confronts Clinton with the seeming inconsistencies between her past professional and moral concerns and the severity of the law. Her response attempts (albeit poorly) to defend the law and hints at a politically strategic (as opposed to purely social good) motive.

Clinton begins her answer by denouncing the previous welfare system as a system universally-perceived as flawed. She begins by justifying welfare change in an almost defensive manner: "I don't think anyone could make to me a convincing argument that we needed to continue doing what we were doing." This half-hearted defense rests on the assumption that any change is progress, regardless of what the change entails. Clinton presents the previous system as the villain, subsequently framing the new system as an improvement by default. Her initial reaction to questions of the welfare bill is not to illustrate the benefits of the proposal, but rather to find fault with the status quo, clearly a much simpler task. She explains, "... the welfare system as it has been operating was not

serving a large number of children. . . " Recognizing the weakness in praise by default, Clinton goes on to acknowledge that the recently signed bill, ". . . has some very important and positive features in it." She gives three examples, ". . . a time certain for the end of welfare, increasing child care support, increasing child support enforcement.. ." The welfare reform bill was an incredibly dense piece of legislation that thoroughly overhauled the entire welfare system. Child support was not one of its major components. Clinton seems to struggle with identifying "positive features," notably overlooking the major provisions of the bill, including imposed time restrictions. Her final attempt at defending the legislation on its own merits comes across as forced: "There's a lot in that welfare bill which the President has advocated ever since he got involved in welfare reform when he was the governor of Arkansas," she assures the audience without further elaboration on the "a lot." That she phrases her praise defensively and in broad generalities suggests that Clinton is not totally convinced of the bill's merits.

After attempting to defend the bill, Clinton forthrightly accepts that the bill itself is flawed. "And there are features in that welfare bill which are not ones that the President thinks are going to be beneficial for anybody and particularly for children." With that acknowledgment out of the way, Clinton proceeds to defend the presidential action of signing a flawed bill into law. Her defense of the bill was two-fold: one, that it was a political maneuver made to avoid worse consequences and two, that it had the potential to eventually lead to quality reform. "But I think when you look at what the president was faced with which was a commitment to end welfare as we know it. . . I think signing that welfare bill will open the door to the kind of welfare reform that can

make a real difference in people's lives." Clinton discusses the difficulty of reform implementation, particularly at the state level, and the necessity of altering the changes that prove not to work well. Coordination between local, state, and federal government necessary to realizing successful implementation is no simple feat.

Clinton maintains that success depends on "humility and honesty about what works and what doesn't work." She continues, "Already we're beginning to hear from the very states which argued strongly in favor of increased state control, pleas for more authority, more money, more guidance." Thus Clinton declares that the success of the welfare reform bill hinges, to some degree, on its supporters' ability to admit their wrongs. She subtly suggests that the "humility" must come from those who supported the idea of welfare reform, but who will later realize its problems upon practical application. It is, thus, through the expected "humility" of others that Clinton is able to reconcile her investment in children with the reform. ". . . I, as a person who cares deeply about what happens to the children who are on welfare, believe that unbalance signing the bill to start this process assuming we can be humble and honest enough to evaluate it as it goes along. . . was the better of the alternatives facing the President."¹⁰⁷ Clinton justifies the bill with the hope that it can lead to something better. This future improvement, she insists, depends upon people's ability to admit wrongs and make necessary changes.

Clinton's reference to the bill as "the better of the alternatives facing the President" is a peculiar way of supporting a piece of legislation. This statement suggests that the signing of the bill was a highly political act. In her assessment of the "alternatives," Clinton seems to overlook the alternative of not signing the bill,

insinuating that that was not an option without political consequence. The final segment of her answer elaborates on the extreme political nature of the bill. In a last attempt to defend the legislation, Clinton explains that it "changes the discussion," for:

. . . people will no longer be able to end every argument about what should be done to provide jobs in inner cities or improve inner city schools or the multitude of other things that need to be addressed in every community in this country by just throwing their hands up in disgust at the welfare system. That excuse is over.

At this point, Clinton comes across as simply fed up with welfare as a scapegoat for social ills. In and of itself such frustration is validated, but it is suspiciously miscast in what should be a demonstration of positive support for a bill signed by her husband. Frustration over displaced hostility toward the welfare system does not constitute a politically redeemable motive for an admittedly-compromised overhaul of the entire system. Clinton's frustration is later revealed to stem less from attitudes towards the welfare system, than from more politically personal issues. Truly outdoing her own previous feeble attempts at supporting the welfare legislation, Clinton declares: "So it is no longer the system's fault, the government's fault, the liberal's fault, the democrat's fault, the soft-headed, woolly-headed people's fault. Those days are over." Clinton's defensive statement sends a clear message of who can relinquish responsibility and no longer be the target of blame.

Clinton's defense of the bill, seems to convey that the bill was passed to prove to its supporters (read: the Republican Congress) that what they advocate is destined to fail. It is constructed as a political maneuver that will appease them momentarily, but ultimately prove their folly. The defensiveness with which Clinton responds to welfare

¹⁰⁷ While the wording of the transcript is not grammatically correct, the point she makes is clear.

questions, and the candor with which she admits that the bill is a political act, is somewhat surprising. Given that the conference occurred only two months after the passage of the major welfare reform bill, the issue itself could not have caught her off guard during a question period. For a speaker usually very refined, Clinton expressed a good deal of passion and resentment. The sensitivity of the issue is most clearly demonstrated with her declaration that the days of blaming the "woolly-headed" people are over.

Clinton's defensive rhetoric resembles that of someone under attack. Given the opportunity to address the welfare reform bill, Clinton suffers no shortage of things to say. Though she has much to say on the issue, she says almost nothing about the legislation itself. One can only assume that her lack of commentary has more to do with her opinion of it, than it does her unfamiliarity with the welfare system and relevant policy. The attitude that Clinton conveys throughout her response is that she supports the President's signing the bill because as First Lady she has to. She does not demonstrate any genuine moral or professional support of the legislation. Overall, she fails to convince that her endorsement is motivated by genuine support for the policy posed by the legislation.

The second time that Clinton is confronted with a question pertaining to welfare reform she changes her approach considerably. At the *Los Angeles Times* Management Conference, on September 26, the issue of welfare arose once again. Clinton was posed with the multi-tiered question:

The President suggested in a television interview last week that he might ask you to play a significant role in the implementation of the Welfare Reform Bill in a second term, so what role would you see for yourself on that subject and what is

your view of the resignation of a couple of administration officials who opposed the bill?

Clinton responds with a much more polished and generously supportive explanation of the welfare reform bill than she delivered just a week earlier. The President's haphazard suggestion that the First Lady assume a formal role in the welfare reform raises some interesting questions. If Clinton were to assume a formal role in the reform process, she could influence the implementation of the policy, insuring the realization of its rightful objectives as she determines them. Further, by becoming involved in the reform effort, Clinton could sufficiently demonstrate support for it. The response Clinton offers to the President's suggestion, however, is made in hindsight of the health care failure.

Clinton's demonstrated desire to distance herself from policy making entirely, even if it could yield benefits, becomes explicitly clear. She first cleverly dismisses the idea of her playing a significant role in reform implementation by laughing off the suggestion. "I think he forgot that we were on television and it was one of those conversations that we have around the kitchen table like, 'Well, gee, don't you think you ought to be involved in trying to make sure welfare reform works.' 'Oh, I don't know, pass the salt.'" Through these statements, Clinton identifies exclusively with her role as First Lady, not as policy maker. She implies that the suggestion of her assuming an officially involved role is, quite literally, laughable. Further, positioning the hypothetical conversation around the kitchen table both locates the Clintons' relationship within the familial setting and domesticates her. That this discussion occurred in the familial private setting, and not the office, construes the idea of her involvement as a distant possibility. Clinton seems to preempt controversy around her husband's haphazard suggestion before

it has an opportunity to develop. Making light of such a suggestion functions as damage control to the mere suggestion of her increased power.

Transitioning away from a focus on her role, and moving the discussion to the reform issue at hand, Clinton navigates her response in a more productive direction:

I will certainly do whatever the President asks me to do and to speak out on behalf of my hope that the welfare reform bill will be corrected in those areas where it needs correction and will be implemented effectively in ways that move people toward self-sufficiency and independence.

In terms of her involvement, Clinton places herself in the passive position juxtaposed to her husband's action. Should the President determine that she should play a role in implementation, she would oblige. It remains clear, however, from her previous dismissive statements, that she has no intention of assuming a formal role.

Following in suit with her other response to the welfare question, Clinton acknowledges that the bill is flawed. This time she phases it more diplomatically by acknowledging that there are "... areas where it needs correction." With equal grace, she accepts that the bill does have potential to "... move people toward self-sufficiency and independence." At this appearance, Clinton's approach to reacting to the welfare reform bill is to distance herself from it and to praise its potential, while acknowledging its flaws.

Attempting to minimize controversy around the bill, Clinton briefly glosses over the issue of departed Administration members, tactfully respecting their decisions.

I respect the people who resigned, two of whom I know quite well, because they honestly believed that the ending of the entitlement for welfare was a grave public policy error and I respect both their conviction and their willingness to act on that conviction. However, I believe that the President was right to sign the bill for a number of reasons.

She quickly moves on to affirming her husband's decision to sign the legislation, something she failed to do in her previous response. She commends the bill both in general terms, as it forces the country to confront the issue of welfare, and with specific examples. "It maintained nutritional assistance and it actually increased child care assistance for people who are attempting to move to work and it did a lot of other things, it increased child support and many other aspects of what we hope will become a structure for implementation." The praise Clinton grants the reform in this instance is clearly much more thought through, and more convincing, as it relies on tangible examples. Though she may find faults with elements of the bill, Clinton convincingly offers its benefits.

One of the major selling points that Clinton returns to, an arguably less persuasive means than concrete examples, is dissatisfaction with status quo and the necessity of attempting change, even if it is imperfect. "But I don't think anyone can defend the existing system," she tells her audience, as if to justify a compromised piece of legislation. Unlike her past response, Clinton does not dwell upon problems of the existing system or sympathize with targets of blame. Gone are the statements relinquishing "soft headed woolly headed people" from responsibility. She quickly moves on to more substantive policy review, highlighting presidential accomplishments achieved before the bill was signed: "... Since my husband became President, we have nearly two million fewer people on welfare." She attributes welfare improvement more to the past efforts of her husband, than to future prospects incurred with the new legislation. She simultaneously directs attention away from the reform bill and towards

efforts made independent of it. These efforts, in effect, work to disprove opposition accusations that welfare policy was stagnant under Democratic leadership.

Returning to the defense of the welfare bill, Clinton argues that the time was right to attempt welfare reform. She attributes the timing of the bill not to political necessity or pressures, but rather to an economically-opportune climate. Whereas, in her previous response, Clinton presents the signing of the welfare bill as an option taken among a lack of desirable alternatives and political bullying, this time she presents it as an opportunity willingly embraced under opportune circumstance.

... The economic figures demonstrate (that came out today) that poverty is dropping because the economy is producing jobs and the unemployment rate and the low inflation rate, those kinds of economic indicators are really a good sign that, if there were a time we could act to begin to change this system which has not worked will for so many people, we could not turn our back on this opportunity.

Clinton readily accepts the responsibility that her husband's administration has assumed in the signing of the bill. She presents the assumed responsibility more as the right thing to do than as a political necessity. From this perspective, the legislation is less a defensive measure and more a pro-active attempt at institutional reform.

Despite this seemingly optimistic embrace of the reform bill, Clinton makes it abundantly clear that the bill still presents many potential problems. "Now, having said that, I know that the President is going to be watching very carefully about what the states do and their capacity to implement the bill." Careful to assign authoritative action to the President, Clinton accepts that the bill alone cannot constitute a sufficient impetus for positive change. She frames the bill as a type of policy in-progress, one which must

evolve over time. Thus, she makes it clear, this is not the last we will hear of welfare reform, indeed, it is just the beginning.

As she had previously, Clinton cites the legislation's ability to disarm critics of the status quo. With less resentment and more optimism, she calls for universal responsibility in insuring a successful reform.

I'm actually quite hopeful about what we're going to be able to accomplish, but it is going to require a lot of responsibility and I would hope everyone who has ever criticized the welfare system, anyone who has ever shaken their heads at generational dependency, will realize that the ball has really been given to us and not just to states, counties and cities, but also to the private sector and the not-for-profit sector.

As a policy-in-progress, welfare reform demands a lot from everyone it effects who, Clinton would argue, is everyone. Clinton presents the welfare reform from a very moderate stance, one that recognizes both the potential dangers, and the possibility for much-needed, quality reform. The second time she was asked about the welfare bill, Clinton's response was clearly better polished. While she admits her hesitations about the bill, she is able to do so in a more optimistic light.

The manner in which Clinton responds to questions posed about the welfare reform bill reveals a good deal about her approach to handling this difficult matter. While Clinton is mute on the issue in all but two of her official speeches, when questioned directly about the legislation, she has no shortage of opinions. There is a feeling of both caution and release in her answers. Release for what she can say, and caution for what she might say. Her second answer marks a notable improvement in the conviction of her support for the bill, yet still pales in comparison to past demonstrations of support capabilities.

Whatever personal or professional feelings Clinton might have toward the welfare bill, she must set them aside and support her husband's action. Showing support for the President's choices is important for any loyalist, but it is crucial for the First Lady. The most essential uncoded role of the First Lady is to act as a resolute supporter of her husband. Their demonstrated unity speaks to the strength of presidential power, and to the familial unit. Were Clinton to publicly deviate from her husband's position she would undermine the authority of the President both in his family and in his nation. She, thus, must play the role of the supportive wife, defending her husband's actions. In this instance, Clinton's responsibility as the supportive wife, is to sway her audience (in each cases, judging by the questions posed, audiences cynical of her support for a bill that appears to counter much of what she has devoted her professional life to) of her genuine conviction that the bill will produce positive results.

For a traditional First Lady, support for her husband's policy actions can be conveyed as easily as a physical appearance (inclusive of smiles and applause) at a press conference. As a policy maker, however, the burden of support falls much stronger. As a professional with a background of pertinent experience and a particularly broad knowledge base on impoverished children, support entails more than passive accompaniment for Clinton. In order for Clinton to successfully demonstrate support for her husband's policy, she must convince her audience that she believes, as policy-maker and a professional, that the law will improve the state of welfare. Though she manages to avoid this type of support in the majority of her speeches, when directly questioned Clinton must, in a sense, sell the welfare reform bill. Particularly in contrast to her presentation of the health care reform, Clinton's attempt at selling welfare reform is, at

best, reserved. With health care, Clinton demonstrated both her expansive knowledge and her personal commitment to universal health coverage. She utilized her strengths both as First Lady and as policy maker to argue for reform. In her appeal for welfare reform, Clinton relies neither on her First Lady nor her policy-making tactics. She offers no appeal to emotion or references to family, nor does she rely on statistics or data analysis to illustrate the potential benefits of this welfare reform. While her support of the bill improves upon second questioning, her responses lack the conviction with which she defended health care reform.

Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform bill poses an important question about what role she plays. Is the First Lady reacting to a bill signed by her husband, or is a policy-maker responding to a piece of legislation with far-reaching implications? Initially, it seems that Clinton tries to play the role of the First Lady. She is silently supportive. With exception of a rare mention, Clinton skirts the welfare issue almost entirely. It finds no way into her accomplishment-overview speeches, as though it did not exist. While perhaps support in the form of silence would suffice for a traditional First Lady, not surprisingly, for Clinton such support did not succeed. Arguably, her silence (in addition, of course, to her past areas of advocacy) called into question the conviction of her support. Thus, when the question was posed directly to her, Clinton had to rise to the challenge of proving her support for her husband.

Through her position taken on the welfare reform issue, and the rhetorical strategy she uses to convey it, Clinton reveals a problematized identity. She attempts to assume the role of the traditional First Lady by silently supporting her husband's decision to sign the welfare bill, despite its apparent flaws. That she unambiguously declared herself

policy maker in the formation of the health care proposal denied the possibility for her to resume the traditional First Lady role without challenge. Once she came out as a policy-maker, with her demonstrated expertise and skills, she could no longer revert back to the ornamental role of a traditional First Lady. Her attempt to resume that role appeared all that much more suspicious and encouraged the direct questioning of her position on the issue. Clinton has clearly problematized the role of the First Lady. No longer can Clinton, the First Lady, rely exclusively on the tradition of silence to support her husband. Demonstrating that she has something to say has placed an increased responsibility on Clinton, a responsibility she would surely embrace did it not have the potential to stir controversy.

Juxtaposed to her role in the health care reform efforts, Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform bill was entirely out of character. The drastic transition from an active official policy maker to a silently supportive First Lady echoes her attempt to balance her two roles in her congressional testimony: utterly disjointed. Two and a half years after her congressional testimony, Clinton still cannot perfect a balanced interpretation of her role as First Lady. Clinton can perform the role of policy maker, as demonstrated through health care, and she can perform the role of traditional First Lady. Her attempts at assuming an exclusively policy making role did not succeed in either furthering her position as a policy maker or in realizing policy goals. Similarly, her attempts at playing the traditional First Lady are unsuccessful in so far as her goals of expanding the First Lady's role and contributing to policy are compromised. Clinton made a conscious choice to avoid welfare policy involvement and assume the role of the supportive First Lady. In that role, however, Clinton seems uncomfortable with her obligation to support

a piece of legislation whose merits she is not entirely convinced of. Assuming the role of the traditional First Lady necessitates that Clinton compromise her policy making objectives, and in the case of the welfare reform legislation, perhaps also compromise her professional and moral integrity.

III) MEDIA ANALYSIS

The media's portrayal of Clinton's reaction to the welfare bill accurately reflected her own public reaction: virtual silence. While coverage of the welfare bill and coverage of Clinton independent of each other abounds, next to no coverage addresses Clinton involvement with the bill. During the time period of the bill signing, the media extensively covered issues relevant to the legislation. Within the one month period around the signing of the welfare bill, 209 articles focused attention on some aspect of the bill. Clearly, this was a huge piece of legislation, guaranteed to produce profound change for better or worse. Similarly, though not as dramatically, because it was around the time of the Democratic National Convention and the approaching election, the media focused a disproportionate amount of attention on Clinton herself.

Only three articles, however, report Clinton's reaction to the bill, each only in passing mention. In the media's eye, Clinton is entirely absent from the development and implementation of the welfare reform. Further, her absence is only noted in the context of an article focusing on her. The lack of attention to Clinton's reaction cannot be attributed to a lack of coverage of either the bill or of Clinton herself, for both were considerably heightened at the time. Conclusively, both speeches and media coverage of

Clinton generally ignore her reaction to the welfare legislation, but on a few instances, mention it in passing.

I expanded the time frame of media coverage around the event from one month to two. The health care testimony was a monumental undertaking headed by Clinton, hence a one month time frame provided a sufficient number of relative articles for analysis. On the other hand, Clinton occupied no formal role in the welfare reform, and coverage of her reaction was scarce. Thus, in order to expand the pool of potentially relevant articles, I examined the two month period around the signing of the bill on July 31, 1996. A search of all articles with Hillary Clinton's name printed from July 1 to August 31, produced 37 titles. Five articles, that did not constitute a substantive piece, were eliminated from the pool. Of the 32 remaining articles, 22 only mention Clinton. The major reoccurring theme in the articles that mention Clinton is the election campaign and the convention. The other notable theme is the Whitewater investigation. None of the articles that only mention Clinton do so with reference to the welfare reform. Seven of the articles focus exclusively on Clinton. Three of these articles covered her role in the convention; two focused on her trip to Eastern Europe in early July; one concerned the "filegate" scandal; and one reported on Clinton's hairstyles.

Finally, three articles of the original 37 reported on Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform legislation. Each of these three articles only briefly mention her response. Two articles focus exclusively on Clinton and one mentions her in a broader overview of the Democratic party. Richard Berke's article, "With Few Issues to Quarrel Over, Democrats Convene," provides an overview of the happenings of the Democratic

convention up until the last night of the President's nomination. Berke devotes a few sentences to Clinton's most recent involvements in the campaign.

Mrs. Clinton, who was raised near this city, kept a particularly high profile; she dropped in at seven events in less than eight hours. She spent much of her time trying to respond to the critics of her four years as First Lady by drawing on the imagery of strong women from an earlier era who battled withering criticism in their day. And she complained that she was being treated more harshly by news coverage than the negative reports about her predecessors. 'I won't say that they paled in comparison to what is said today, but they didn't have as wide a circulation,' she said. In an interview on CNN, Mrs. Clinton defended her husband's decision last week to sign a welfare bill that has been denounced by many liberals. 'This bill does a lot of good things that need to be done,' she said. 'I don't think it was that flawed.'¹⁰⁸

Berke's depiction of Clinton conveys a defensive stance, both towards the way she has approached her role as First Lady and her husband's decision to sign the welfare bill.

Berke implies that not only did Clinton maintain "a particularly high profile," but that she primarily focused on herself and the challenges of the past term. Berke chooses to focus on only one issue outside of Clinton's role in addition to her defense of that role.

Given media's demonstrated apathy to Clinton's reaction to the welfare bill, it is interesting that Berke chose to address it. He presents Clinton as having "defended her husband's decision," a traditionally appropriate undertaking for a First Lady. In close conjunction with Clinton's own self-presentation, Berke's article accurately reflects the silently supportive First Lady. That he qualifies the bill as having "been denounced by many liberals" further emphasizes Clinton's supportive role. The underlying assumption is that Clinton is, or has been perceived as, a liberal and the welfare bill has demonstrated that Clinton's unwavering support for her husband will take precedence over her political leanings. This potentially controversial stance seems to be what draws Berke to the

welfare bill. Without directly stating anything, Berke insinuates a bold move made by the First Lady in her attempt to negotiate her role in the face of past. Berke presents Clinton as she compares herself to past First Ladies, scandalous in contemporary times and glorified in retrospect, and as a victim of the media. Clinton, via Berke's portrayal, is aware of her critics and at the same time confident of her actions (a presumption or hope that history will treat her better than the media has). This confidence is juxtaposed to a portrayal of the supportive First Lady who suspends her beliefs to stand behind her husband's choices. Berke does not overtly call attention to the seeming inconsistency, but upon careful read, he casts doubt on the sincerity with which Clinton defends the bill. Quoting her defense as, "I don't think it was that flawed," Berke's portrayal of Clinton does not bide well for the conviction of her statement.

Another article focusing on Clinton's role in the convention more directly addresses the curious nature of her reaction to the welfare bill. R.W. Apple Jr.'s article, "Teacher, Not a Celebrity," reports on Clinton's speech delivered at the Democratic convention. Noting what issues she covered, Apple also noted what she did not cover:

She also omitted any mention of the welfare bill signed by President Clinton, which many critics have contended puts millions of the nation's poorest children at risk. Among those critics is Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund, on whose board Mrs. Clinton once served.¹⁰⁹

In a relatively direct manner, Apple attributes the avoidance of the welfare bill in her speech to its controversial nature. Clinton is neutrally depicted as neither defending or supporting the bill. She is, however, portrayed as betraying her professional past and her personal loyalties. The overriding implication of the article, however, is that the bill

¹⁰⁸ Berke, Richard L. "With Few Issues to Quarrel Over, Democrats Convene." *New York Times*. August 27, 1996. P. A1.

compromised the liberal integrity of the Party and that Clinton is more an extension of that than she is an individual betraying actor.

The final article addressing Clinton and the welfare bill is unquestionably the most forthright about Clinton's uncharacteristic silence in face of the legislation's potential harms. Russell Baker's editorial piece, "In the Attic? Hillary?," questions the seeming disappearance of Clinton, particularly during the 1996 campaign. Baker charges that the re-election effort has silenced Clinton as a demonstration that it will "... stop at nothing to keep Clinton in the White House another four years." He calls particular attention to the welfare issue:

Surely if Hillary Clinton were still able to speak she would not have been silent while her husband was deciding to put the boot into welfare children. We know her as champion of children, as best pals with Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund. We know her as an admirer of Eleanor Roosevelt, who kept husband Franklin constantly reminded that Presidents have a duty to help life's losers. Yet here, at a critical moment for the future of children, Hillary is unheard from, absent, totally and mysteriously silent. It is tempting to believe that she has been disappeared under orders from the White House's Richelieu, one Richard Morris, a political tactician with power, it is said, to control the President's mind.¹¹⁰

Baker goes far beyond simply noting Clinton's suspicious absence from the welfare reform discussion. He goes so far as to posit a conspiracy theory of sorts. While the media in general has skirted the issue of Clinton's reaction to the welfare bill, Baker's editorial does not shy away in the slightest. He proposes that Clinton's avoidance of the issue is a result of calculated strategy. That Clinton's silence could be a strategy for re-election confirms her position as a political liability, namely when she speaks, and the feared potential for an outspoken First Lady who undermines presidential policy.

¹⁰⁹ Apple, R.W. Jr. "Teacher, Not a Celebrity." *New York Times*. August 28, 1996. P. A1.

Further, Baker asserts this strategy to silence Clinton is a strategy not self-generated by Clinton, but imposed from the outside, specifically imposed by Morris. Accrediting Morris with the strategy denies Clinton any agency she might have had in determining her own role. Baker's piece, most-probably unintentionally so, paints Clinton as not only a political liability, but also as a political pawn. While Baker takes the most obvious notice to Clinton's uncharacteristic silence, his conclusions about her silence undermine both her credibility and her agency. The article does, however, call attention to the equal importance of what is not spoken to what is spoken. Baker's is the only article that actually reviews Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform bill, pronouncing it an issue of importance.

Media coverage of Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform bill accurately reflects her self-presentation as a silently supportive First Lady by almost entirely overlooking her involvement (or lack thereof). That only three of 32 articles mentioned Clinton and the welfare bill attests to the status of her image as a traditional First Lady seen and not heard. While coverage reflects Clinton's actions it does so in a less than flattering light, presenting Clinton's reaction as at once a weak defense, a betrayal of professional integrity, and a strategized political maneuver. Less than a respectful observation of a supportive First Lady, media coverage casts disapproving judgment on Clinton's role as the silently supportive First Lady.

IV) CONCLUSION

Perhaps more than any other case study, media portrayal quite accurately reflects Clinton's self-presented reaction to the welfare reform bill. In both, the issue is generally

¹¹⁰ Baker, Russell. "In the Attic? Hillary?" *New York Times*. August 3, 1996. P. A19.

avoided, but addressed on rare instance. The media's lack of coverage of Clinton's response attests to the success with which she distanced herself from the policy. Neither her speeches nor media coverage associates Clinton with the legislation. The only role she plays in the welfare reform is that of reactor. There is no hint of policy maker, formulator, implimentor, or even influencer in her image at all. Throughout the welfare reform process, Clinton exclusively performs the role of the First Lady. She assertively supports her husband, verbally defending him when she is called to do so, despite professional or personal qualms she may have with the legislation, and otherwise she remains quiet. The media, for the most part, is responsive to her role as the supportive First Lady, for there is no confusion as to how to portray her.

In the case of the welfare reform reaction, Clinton has better control of the media's portrayal of her. By and large, the media's depictions are predictable. Because she does not give much to report, the media must work with what she does offer. She has a tighter control over media coverage when she functions as a traditional First Lady. The First Lady as a subject of news coverage is relatively straight forward: she is quiet; she is supportive; she is predictable. She is easily reportable, offering no surprises and posing no challenges. When Clinton works within the traditional First Lady framework, she knows what is expected of her and the media knows what to expect from her. Problems arise, and discrepancies emerge, between what she projects and the media reports when she strays from the existing framework. Without established guidelines for reporting a policy-making First Lady the media copes by casting her in one extreme or the other. When Clinton plays the traditional role of the First Lady she evades this problem entirely.

For Clinton, assuming the role of the supportive First Lady carries an increased responsibility from the tradition of silence. She cannot simply be silent and expect for that silence to be interpreted as active support. Once Clinton entered the policy making realm she relinquished that privilege (if it is indeed a privilege). As a policy-maker, Clinton must actively demonstrate her support for legislation that pertains to her area of expertise. When the media covers Clinton's attempt to assume the traditional silent approach, it dismissively suggests that she must betray her professional past or become a political liability. Presumably, the silence of a traditional First Lady would go unchallenged by the media, however, Clinton suspended that privilege when she assumed the role of head of the health care task force. Thus when media coverage does compliment Clinton's self-presentation it is unable to do so in a complementary manner, suggesting her failure to adequately support her husband's legislation.

At the same time, the fact that the media reports (or does not report) Clinton as she presents (or does not present) herself cannot be underestimated. Only three mentions in a total of 32 articles is a considerably small amount for a visible figure renown for past policy involvement and firm beliefs on particular issues. Clinton intentionally cast her self in an absent role and the media responded by portraying her in a similarly absent role. Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform bill is more accurately presented by the media than any of other case studies. Through her reaction, Clinton succeeds in the political figure's perpetual task of swaying the media to work in conjunction with calculated image presentation. This rare instance where media coverage corresponds directly with Clinton's self-presentation occurs when Clinton presents herself, and can be portrayed, in an existing traditional framework. The relationship between the First Lady and the media

functions most efficiently when tradition is adhered to. Tradition is adhered to and a corresponding relationship established, however, at the cost of compromising Clinton's policy objectives. When she assumes the role of the silently supportive First Lady, Clinton makes no headway in expanding the role of the First Lady; similarly, she makes no positive contribution to the policy arena. Her objectives are compromised in an effort to work within traditional confines and cater to media coverage. Ultimately, the power of cultural norms triumphs in a system that rewards tradition, allowing little room for Clinton to reinterpret the role of the First Lady.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHILD CARE CONFERENCE: **TRADITION ACCOMMODATED**

I) CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

"I am a relatively traditional person and enjoy my roles as wife and mother, but it has also been natural and essential for me to expand my life and to participate outside the home as a partner and businesswoman and in public service as a First Lady. . . But I never forgot that I was there because my husband held his high office, not because I had been elected."

-Rosalynn Carter¹¹¹

In 1984, four years after her husband left office, Rosalynn Carter reflected on the balance she strove to maintain between fulfilling her role as a spouse and contributing to the public good. As First Lady, Carter actively advocated a multitude of issues, most notably mental health and the Equal Rights Amendment. Her advocacy of such issues surpassed that of her recent predecessors, as she expanded both the scope of issues and the ferocity with which they could be pursued. Carter's interpretation of her role as First Lady prioritized her obligations as wife and mother, while catering to her concerns for social policy. Her entrance into the policy influencing arena drew expected controversy from media and public opinion alike.¹¹² Perhaps, such controversy encouraged Carter to

¹¹¹ Carter, Rosalynn. *First Lady from Plains*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984. P. 298.

¹¹² Meg Greenfield wrote in a June 20, 1977 *Newsweek* article that if Carter was going to play a substantive role in her husband's administration then she should find a way to make herself accountable for

constantly remind herself, ". . .that I was there because my husband held his high office, not because I had been elected."

After a long hiatus from the policy arena, on October 23, 1997, Hillary Clinton publicly assumed a policy influencing position as host of the White House Conference on Child Care. The approach Clinton took to her resumed involvement with policy closely echoes the sentiments of Carter: respecting first and foremost her role as wife and mother while creating a space for her "natural and essential" participation in social policy. Through her involvement with the child care conference, Clinton more successfully negotiated her role as First Lady and policy-maker. Ultimately, in order to accommodate her policy goals, Clinton must prioritize her role as First Lady by approach policy influencing from the perspective of a First Lady, not as a policy maker. As demonstrated by the welfare reform case, if Clinton meets the demands of the traditional First Lady's role, media's coverage works in tandem with her own self-presentation, thus granting her tighter control over her image.

Continuing her quiet approach to the role of the First Lady, epitomized by her reaction to the welfare reform bill, Clinton maintained a low profile up until the Child Care Conference. Much of Clinton's evaluation of the welfare reform bill focused on the importance of proper implementation. While rejecting the idea of an official role in the implementation process, Clinton found ways to assert her influence in at least parts of the implementation process. The welfare law created a program of Federal grants to states that designated \$13.9 billion over a six year period to help finance child care. This constituted a marked increase of more than \$4 billion, or approximately 50 percent, over

her actions. Carter also failed to place high on lists of "most admired women" as most of her predecessors

what would have been spent before the law's passage.¹¹³ Thus, the welfare bill brought the issue of child care into the policy foreground, as the states were forced to confront how the grants could best be spent. In addition, the calm state of political affairs and the stable economy (particularly emphasized by the passage of the balanced budget agreement in July) created an environment conducive to addressing less politically pressing issues, such as child care. Given Clinton's past professional involvement with family issues (including child care itself), child care posed an ideal issue for her to champion at this opportune time.

Translating its staunch beliefs in the power of discussion into action, in 1997, the Clinton Administration began to facilitate dialogue conferences to confront social issues. In April of that year, the White House held a conference on early childhood development hosted by Clinton herself. The "Brain Child" conference, as it came to be known, was a relatively low-key event that attracted little media attention. It was, however, Clinton's first public appearance in the domestic policy arena since the health care reform failure. The Child Care Conference adopted the framework of the Brain Child Conference, suggesting that the first functioned as a trial run of sorts for the higher-profile later conference. The White House conference format emulates that of the public or private sector professional conferences, where experts and others affected by the issue converge for discussion. The objectives of such conferences are not necessarily resolution, but rather more simply the encouragement of dialogue to foster the exchange of ideas. Thus, while policy is discussed, generating ideas that may lead to policy formation, it is not

had. (Caroli. p. 267).

¹¹³ Pear, Robert. "Child Care Talks Return First Lady to Spotlight." *New York Times*. October 22, 1997. P. A24.

determined at the conference. In the particular instance of the Child Care Conference, the President hoped to use ideas addressed to help form the policy he would propose during the up-coming State of the Union.¹¹⁴

More, however, than a vehicle to policy development, the Child Care Conference brought Clinton back into the spotlight of social policy. The conference was held just days before her fiftieth birthday, which became a true media party. Clinton, admittedly used her momentous birthday to draw attention to the conference and the issue of child care.¹¹⁵ In addition to an unusual amount of press coverage, Clinton made a most unprecedented appearance on *Oprah* two days before the conference. It was not the conference itself, or the issue of child care that solicited public attention, but rather Clinton as the main attraction. The conference was clearly presented as Clinton's project. As a re-entry point into the policy sphere, the Child Care Conference was an ideal vehicle for Clinton to negotiate a successful balance between First Lady and policy maker.

II) SPEECH ANALYSIS

Situated in the East Room of the White House, the grand hosting room used largely for ceremonial purposes, Clinton welcomed the guests to the conference and to the White House. While the event was framed as Clinton's endeavor, the President assumed a large role in the conference. Clinton delivered the introduction, which was followed by

¹¹⁴ During the Conference the President announced that, "In the coming months, our administration will develop a plan to be unveiled at the next State of the Union, to improve access and affordability, and to help to ensure the safety of child care in America."

¹¹⁵ John M. Broder posits in his article "For Hillary Clinton at 50, Yet Another Beginning," "It is no coincidence that the child care symposium came the same week as Mrs. Clinton's birthday, which is being treated as an unofficial coming out party for the second-term First Lady." (*New York Times*, October 25, 1997. P. A20)

the President's lengthy remarks outlining policy ideas. Clinton and the President then co-facilitated a discussion, where he assumed the more vocal position. The concluding remarks and thank yous were also delivered by the President. The conference format demonstrated a shared commitment to providing better child care, initiated by the First Lady and executed primarily by the President. Throughout the conference, Clinton sought to maintain a careful balance between traditional First Lady and policy maker, which manifests both in her role and in her approach to the issue. She avoids extremes on both ends, managing to incorporate both aspects of her role into a cohesive First Lady.

Clinton's introductory remarks welcome all participants to the conference. More than a cordial acknowledgment of gathered experts, Clinton's introduction casts her in the role of the gracious hostess welcoming visitors into her home. "We are delighted to have with us in the East Room today members of Congress and the President's Cabinet. . .and a great group of distinguished guests. . ." In tandem with her traditional role as First Lady, Clinton plays the role of the White House hostess. That the conference is held at the White House, enables the First Lady to kindly welcome guests into her home.

The guests that Clinton hosts for the conference comprise a diverse group. The group of invited participants, in addition to government officials, includes both "parents and experts." The conference is deliberately contrived to avoid any semblance to an isolated policy generating exercise. The combination of public and private spheres, expert and regular folks insures the all-inclusivity of the conference. The message is clear: child care is not something that should be government-imposed or expert-determined. A proper child care policy must draw from all ranks, and it must involve the people, in order to insure that their needs are met. Clinton's specific reference to the

inclusion of "parents and experts" cites a necessary balance between personal concerns and the demands of social efficiency. This balance between parents and experts mirrors the balance that Clinton strives to achieve in her approach to the conference. The balance between the traditional First Lady's (wife and mother) obligations and her professional goals as a policy-maker is imperative to the fulfillment of both roles.

Clinton introduces the topic with an emotional appeal to all families who have struggled with problems of child care. She casts the issue in very personal, yet also universally shared, experiences.

I'd like to take a minute for all of us to think about what's happening in America this morning, and about what happens every morning. Parents are making the preparations to get to work, and those preparations include for most working families putting their children in the care of others. And most, even before they're out the door, are worrying about the logistics of the care that their children will receive. Some are even worrying about the safety or quality of that care.

Clinton appeals both to the personal experience of those with children in day care and the empathy of those without. She frames the problems of finding quality child care as a universalized personal experience of Americans. Child care, Clinton suggests, is everyone's problem, if nothing else but at the level of sympathy for shared personal hardship.

In addition to the emotional strain of arranging child care at the personal level, Clinton maintains that child care affects society in a more general way. Clinton expands her appeal for child care by suggesting that the issue extends beyond the realm of the private family and penetrates the public work space. Namely, that the emotional strain induced by child care pressures can be carried over into the work place, effecting the productivity of workers. "Many parents will go to work, but have trouble focusing on

work because they are worried about the snuffle that their daughter had or wondering how their son is faring." Clinton's appeal to the trials of parents relying on child care does not function solely to solicit sympathy for action, but also implies that the effects of such tribulations have broader social and economic implications. As Clinton proposes, a concerned parent cannot concentrate completely on work and perform at maximum efficiency.

Incidents of poor work performance caused by child care preoccupation inevitably effect a given company's productivity and, as a socially pervasive phenomenon, effects the status of the economy. Clinton's argument is a crafty combination of emotional and utilitarian appeal. The balance of her appeal, not only functions to reach a more expansive audience, but also to demonstrate her achieved balance between traditional First Lady and policy maker. The traditional First Lady more successfully relies on appeals to an emotional situation, with an underlying maternal sympathy. The policy making First Lady is able to more persuasively present utilitarian arguments, aimed to appeal to policy-makers by providing substantive objectives beyond the emotional realm.

The distractions that child care concerns generate cause potential problems for workers at all economic levels. Clinton presents child care as everyone's concern, across class lines. "Some parents ask themselves these questions in the afternoon, as they prepare to go to a swing shift, or at midnight as they start to work in one of the other jobs that are essential to keeping our economy strong." Problems of child care are not a bourgeois or a working-class issue, but a social issue. Clinton legitimates the need for dependable child care at all economic levels not only for individuals, but for a efficiently functioning economy. By extension, presidential efforts to improve the state of child care

can benefit everyone. Framing the child care issue as one with broad-base appeal attempts to mobilize support for the issue across class divides.

To further emphasize the universal need for improved child care, Clinton relies on all-inclusive rhetoric to depict a unified desire for quality care. "Earlier this month I went to the University of Maryland to visit its center for young children, and as soon as I walked in the door I knew immediately it was the kind of place any of us would feel comfortable sending our children. I was, frankly, tempted to sign up myself." The standards for evaluation that Clinton sets for quality care are ones to which she would personally ascribe. The use of "us" and "our" implies a collective standard upon which all can agree. Child care, she suggests, that is good enough for the First Lady should be available to all. Clinton's reference to a particular cite as a positive example approaches the issue of child care from an optimistic standpoint. She provides a positive example to illustrate both the existence of quality care and the potential for increased availability of such quality. Whereas with welfare, Clinton reproached the status quo as entirely negative, citing any change an improvement. With child care, Clinton hopes to highlight and expand existing positive features. The picture she paints is neither bleak, nor an overwhelming task. That exemplary models exist speaks to the optimism with which Clinton approaches improvements in child care. She aims to improve the situation by using existing positive elements, not to overhaul an entire system.

Clinton illustrates the extent of her commitment to child care by alluding to her personal visits to child care cites. As she did for health care reform, Clinton educated herself about the state of child care by visiting cites and talking with those directly involved. With child care centers, however, the First Lady's presence is more in keeping

with traditional norms than exploring health care venues. A First Lady in a child care facility, playing and visiting with children, appears a natural extension of her role as First Mother. She remains true to the maternal traditional role of the First Lady in a way impossible while investigating health care. Further, her expertise in the area of child care is a presumably natural outcome of her status as a mother. Thus when she visits facilities to generate policy ideas she does so not as a policy maker (as was the case with health care), but rather as the First Lady concerned with the condition of the nation's children.

Clinton visits child care facilities not only to informally evaluate the condition of some of the nation's cities, but also to hear personal stories of child care difficulties. She relays to conference attendees the story of a mother who could not afford quality day care with her modest salary and the sacrifices she made to find care for her young son. Clinton uses the story the woman shared with her as an illustration of the dilemma many confront. "She and so many women like her are the reason we are here today, and parents like Paula Broglio, who is here with us in the East Room, represent the millions of parents who worry about this important issue." Simultaneously connecting with individual quandaries and a communal need for change, Clinton emphasizes the importance of and investment in the issue. Clinton is interested in approaching child care at the everyday personal experience level not, as her sharing of stories demonstrates, from a disconnected policy position.

The argument that Clinton presents, however, does not rest solely on shared personal experiences. While careful to avoid casting herself in the policy-maker's role, Clinton substantiates her claims with statistics and expert citations to affirm the need for reform. The quantifiable support she presents is cleverly couched in terms of the

personal. Immediately following her appeal to Paula Broglia and the "millions of parents" who have experienced similar difficult situations, Clinton supports her assertion with more tangible means:

Thirteen million American children spend all or some of their day begin cared for by someone other than their parent. Yet, a recent national study found that child care at most centers in our country is, 'poor to mediocre, with almost half of the infants and toddlers in rooms having less than minimal quality.' . . . And quality care, as Paula and so many other know, when it is available is often financially out of reach. According to the 1995 census, families earning under \$1,200 a month or less than \$15,000 a year pay an average of 25 percent of their income for child care.

Clinton's rhetoric attempts to appeal both to the personal experience of families and to the rationality of experts who confirm the need for change in a flawed national system. The statistics she supplies are accessible, cautious not to alienate anyone outside of the policy making field. Clinton's claims are neither based strictly on an emotional appeal, nor presented from a distant policy-making stance. Throughout the conference, Clinton balances the call for child care initiative on two fronts: between the individual and the communal appeal, and between the emotional and the rational justification. "With 45 percent of our children under the age of one in day care regularly, the issue of quality has tremendous bearing not just on individual lives, but on the future of our nation." Clinton aims to provide an incentive for everyone to take a vested interest in child care, wholly avoiding controversy or opposition in any form.

The approach that Clinton takes to reforming child care is completely non-invasive. Contrary to her health care reform efforts, Clinton offers dialogue, as opposed to policy. "So this conference is meant to start a conversation," she explains, "It is only one day, but we hope it is a day that will renew our efforts to improve child care in

America." Clinton assumes a non-threatening, non-controversial approach to the issue of child care. Dialogue, in and of itself, is a relatively passive approach to policy reform. As such, it is an ideal forum for Clinton to safely re-enter the policy-making arena. Discussion enables the administration to address and prioritize an issue without actually having to actively advocate policy or budgetary change. The conference provides a safe format for Clinton to champion a cause involving minimal risk.

The conversation facilitated by the conference is clearly not about making overridding policy decisions, but rather about bringing an issue to the policy foreground. Similarly, Clinton makes it clear that efforts to improve child care should be communally based, and not imposed by the government. If nothing else, the reaction to the health care reform initiative served as an exemplary illustration of Americans' fear of government excess. In his book, *The Democratic Wish*, James Morone depicts Americans' age-old resistance to too much government. "New forms of state authority—even, at times, for the extension of narrow benefits to broad constituencies—are likely to evoke the battle cry of the American founding: a tyrannous state threatens the rights of free people."¹¹⁶ The fear of government infringing on individual choice and life pursuits is a theme that persists throughout American history. The reaction to government's involvement in health care regulation solicited this very fear that too much government would ultimately result in the denial of individual's rights to determine their own care preferences. Certainly, Clinton learned the lessons taught by *The Democratic Wish* through her experience with health care.

¹¹⁶ Morone, James. *The Democratic Wish*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Revised Edition, 1998. P. 4.

The lessons learned translated into careful maneuvering with child care reform efforts to avoid similar trappings:

We also hope it will involve our entire national community, because every aspect of our life together must be involved in looking for solutions. The federal government has a role to play, but so do state governments, business and labor, the nonprofit and religious communities, school systems, individual citizens, and especially parents.

Clinton depicts child care as an issue that everyone has an investment in and thus everyone must contribute to insure its proper improvement. Perhaps more importantly, Clinton explicitly states that child care reform cannot be based entirely on government imposition. Much of the criticism responding to health care reform was a fear of too much government intervention and an excess of government regulation. Days before Clinton's congressional testimony, conservative Republican Representative Dick Armey wrote a letter to the *Wall Street Journal* exemplifying this type of criticism of the Clinton health plan. "...[T]he Clinton plan is a bureaucratic nightmare that will ultimately result in higher taxes, reduced efficiency, restricted choice, longer lines, and a much, much bigger federal government."¹⁷ With child care, such criticisms are pre-empted. She lays out her intentions unambiguously as a facilitator, not a government actor imposing pre-determine regulations.

Clinton further emphasizes this point by stressing the need for variation in child care options to accommodate different needs. "We also know how important it is to ensure choice for parents in their selection of child care." The notion of choice appeared throughout the health care reform campaign, yet less successfully so. As an extreme illustration of this, many conservative voices, including the ever-vocal Rush Limbaugh

and Ralph Reed, criticized the Clinton health care reform plan as socialized medicine, where everyone would be relegated to receive the same mediocre care without any choice in the matter¹¹⁸. Inherent in the resistance to extensive government involvement is a fear for loss of choice, that government intervention is synonymous with unanimity of services or pre-determined decisions. Clinton carefully presents child care efforts as both collective and respectful of individual needs.

Clearly cautious in her presentation of the child care issue and in her re-immersion into policy making, Clinton strategically avoids exciting controversy. But the conservatism in her approach, she insists, does not undermine the importance of the issue or the vehemence with which she plans to pursue it.

So I hope we approach this conversation with a certain fearlessness, with the same kind of energy that I see on the face of a three or four-year-old who's going about some task that he knows will occupy himself. We need to have the same kind of fearless approach, asking the hard questions and then listening to the answers.

Thus the format of the conference, while comfortable and non-threatening, is not empty dialogue or a feel-good exercise, but rather a starting point for confronting daunting challenges, inherent in any type of reform effort. In part a defensive mechanism and a self-affirming reassurance, Clinton claims that the conference is not an easy way out nor a means for occupying idle time. Through this assurance, Clinton indirectly acknowledges the vast discrepancy in her approach to policy initiative from health care to child care, but subverts evaluative comparisons between the two. Where a task force and congressional testimony may have suited the prospects for health care reform, Clinton presents the

¹¹⁷ Arney, Dick. "Your Future Health Plan." *Wall Street Journal*. October 13, 1993. As quoted in Skocpol. P. 144.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.* P. 155.

conference format as the most appropriate for the issue of child care. She defends her less confrontational approach to policy by stressing its appropriate application to the issue.

At the same time, Clinton does not place unreasonably high quantifiable expectations on the outcome produced by the conference. "There will be a lot of questions raised today," she tells the conference. The objective is not to derive policy, or even to generate conclusive answers, rather simply to start what she predicts will be a long process of collective and gradual reform. While she maintains that the issue is pressing, it is not something that can be rushed into haphazardly, without thorough exploration of existing possibilities and extensive participation.

Clinton raises one question of obvious importance to her: "... how do we leave ideology at the door and honestly address the real needs of America's families." Clinton bases this question on the assumption that everyone wants the nation's children well cared for and by extension everyone has a stake in realizing that desire. As an issue with collective ubiquitous benefits, the realization of child care improvements should not be impeded upon by partisan bickering. Clinton paints child care as an issue above the realm of the political, one that personal and ideological differences should not infringe upon. She simultaneously stresses the importance of child care, the need for collective action, and most notably distances herself from the political arena. The disclaimer she makes casts her, not in a policy-making position, but in an apolitical effort to improve the state of the nation's children. Certainly, such efforts nicely complement the traditional role of the First Lady, in a way policy making cannot.

Clinton concludes her introductory remarks by again calling for everyone's participation in the important child care improvement efforts:

And we hope that this conference will spur the conversations around kitchen tables and water coolers and standing in supermarket aisles or at soccer games, or while going to or from work in the carpool--whatever it takes to engage more Americans in this discussion, to make it clear that we want American parents to succeed at the most important task they have, caring for the next generation, and to be good workers who contribute to the economy and the quality of life that we enjoy in our country.

She hopes that the dialogue initiated by her conference will continue, and perhaps flourish, in all different life situations. In so far as she transforms what was once a private issue dealt with by individual families into a topic of national concern, Clinton politicizes child care. She collapses the distinction drawn between public and private problems. As she sees it, it is appropriate to address the issue of child care both at home in the kitchen and at work around the water cooler because it is an issue that effects both the home and work place. Child care should not be a concern that families have to confront on their own, for repercussions reverberate beyond the family into the work place.

By Clinton's rationale, a citizen's ability to care for the next generation, and to be a productive worker is infringed upon by concerns inherent in less-than-satisfactory child care. Thus, as the quality of life and the economy of the nation suffers, the nation is legitimated in actively pursuing its vested interest in realizing quality child care. While Clinton proposes to set ideology and politics aside, she simultaneously constructs child care as a political issue. For if child care were entirely apolitical, then the conference would be a futile exercise in fluff discussion. That Clinton brings up the economic repercussions of flawed child care emphasizes her desire to construct child care as a very real, pressing, and political issue. Clinton converts a previously-perceived private issue

into one of public concern, gently pushing the private into the public sphere and inviting all to participate.

Once Clinton concludes her remarks, she introduces the President who proceeds to take the upper hand in leading the conference for the remainder. The President thanks those in attendance and the First Lady for her efforts. "This is a happy day," he announces, "because I have been listening to the First Lady talk about this for more than 25 years now, and it may be that I will finally be able to participate in at least a small fraction of what I have been told for a long time I should be doing." The President's notice of the First Lady's extensive involvement with the issue calls the audiences attention to the fact that Clinton is in her natural element, pursuing issues of great importance, professional and otherwise, to her. She has not taken on a new issue with little previous relevant experience in an attempt to overhaul it, as she did with health care, rather child care is an extension of her past involvements.

The President expresses his desire to become involved at a modest level, yet through the remainder of the conference he leads the conversation and dominates the policy discussion. While Clinton's speech is entirely void of any policy mention, the President outlines a list of potential policy initiatives. He announces: "In the coming months, our administration will develop a plan to be unveiled at the next State of the Union, to improve access and affordability, and to help to ensure the safety of child care in America. In the meantime, I want to announce four specific things we can do right now. . . ." Thus, while the conference is primarily Clinton's project, it is the President who assumes all policy responsibility. Clinton frames the need for policy action, but leaves policy announcements to the President, the policy making actor.

Further distancing herself from the policy making role, Clinton passes on the responsibility of expertise onto others. Later in the conference when discussing approaches to meeting the challenge of change, Clinton thanks past speakers and invites the participation of designated experts. "We're going to turn to four additional experts who will address how we're working to assure that families have access to safe, affordable child care, and also give us some insight in to what is working well and what we might do to try to replicate that." In the health care reform process, Clinton assumed the role of expert herself. Now, working closer to her own professional field, Clinton shies away from filling the expert role. She does not assume a didactic role, nor does she presume to know the answers.

The child care conference proves an ideal forum for Clinton to re-enter the policy-making arena, enabling her to appease demands placed upon her, both as a traditional First Lady and as a professional and policy-maker. Her involvement in the conference is clearly quite active; from the initiation to the realization stages, Clinton plays a dominant role. In the conference itself, Clinton frames the issue as imperative to individuals and communities alike, calling for participation at all levels in the reform process. Clinton presents child care as an issue-in-progress, and uses the conference to initiate the process. She acts as a mediator, not as a policy expert imposing her expertise from above. Clinton both substantiates her appeal for child care reform with an emotional overture based on trying personal experiences, and she provides some statistical evidence, carefully couched it in personal terms, so as to avoid alienating anyone with hard numbers. Rather than assuming the role of expert and policy maker, as she did with health care reform, Clinton consciously avoids such a powerful position, instead leaving all policy initiation to the

President. The role Clinton played in the child care issue brought the topic to the President's attention and then initiated and facilitated dialogue. Such a role negotiated Clinton's position as First Lady and as policy-maker well. She avoided both the overt policy-making role she assumed for health care reform that alienated many, and the suspiciously silent role she adopted in reaction to the welfare reform bill. With the child care conference, Clinton creates a space where she can actively participate in policy discussion and still fulfill her role as a traditional First Lady.

In addition to the methodology of the conference, the issue of child care itself was ideal for Clinton's purposes of combining the First Ladyship and policy making. The only way for Clinton to re-enter the policy-making arena, without confronting the criticism that plagued her during health care, was to champion an issue that complimented the role of the traditional First Lady. Child care provided an issue that excited Clinton's passions both as a mother and as a policy-maker. Concern for the nation's children is, in many ways, a hallmark of a traditional First Lady's concerns. Clinton can pursue child care without neglecting her role as wife and mother. The balance she strives to achieve in the child care conference (between government and private involvement, individual and communal investment, emotional and statistical appeals, and the political and apolitical) nicely mirror the balance she strives to achieve in the fulfillment of her dual role as First Lady and policy-maker.

The policy-making role that Clinton is able to fulfill, while maintaining the position of the traditional First Lady, is not direct policy making (comparable to that of health care reform). Indeed, the policy that Clinton partakes in is more a form of policy influencing than of policy making. Clinton contributes to policy, but in a less direct way

than she had previously tried to do; her policy-making attempts are more moderate and less aggressive. While she clearly occupies an influential position in relation to policy, the President maintains control and policy-yielding powers.

Indeed, her entire approach to the issue of child care is much more toned down. She does not claim to be or act as an expert. Nor does she excessively identify with her role as a mother, evading direct reference to her own experience as a mother. She does not attempt to overcompensate for her involvement with a policy issue by qualifying it as an extension of her role as mother. Certainly, such an extension is implied simply from the issue chosen, but overt qualifications find no place in this instance.¹¹⁹ Child care is a natural enough extension of the traditional First Lady's role as a concerned advocate for children, that no disclaimer is necessary for modest policy involvement. Clinton has successfully negotiated a space where her policy contribution is accepted and even appreciated. In order to create such a space, however, she must compromise her policy-making role by relegating it to the sphere of influence. Clinton has expanded the framework of a traditional First Lady to include active policy-influencing. By avoiding policy formation, Clinton is best able to balance her role as the First Lady with her professional desires to contribute to policy. This balance prioritizes the role of the First Lady, insisting that attempts at direct policy making has to be sacrificed, yet providing ample space for the inclusion of policy contribution. As a traditional First Lady, Clinton is able to work in conjunction with the President to form policy: she as the influencer and he as the formal presenter.

¹¹⁹ This marks a stark contrast to her presentation of health care reform where she told the congressional committee members: "But more importantly for me, I'm here as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a

III) MEDIA ANALYSIS

As demonstrated by the coverage of Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform bill, the media more accurately reports Clinton's involvement when she works within the confines of the traditional First Lady's role. By and large, media coverage of Clinton's participation in the child care conference compliments her own self-presentation delivered in her conference speech. The amount of coverage appropriately corresponds to the event itself and to Clinton's re-entry into the policy forum. During the month of the conference, from October 1 to October 31, 1997, a total of 23 articles mentioned Clinton's name in the body of the text. Three of the 23 were omitted, as non-substantial pieces, yielding a total of 20 articles covering Clinton in the given time period. Numerically speaking, conference coverage pales in comparison to coverage of the health care congressional testimony which produced a total of 32 articles in the one month period around the testimony. Given the unprecedented visibility of the testimony, for a one time policy event, 20 articles is a reasonable, even generous, amount of coverage for a single policy event.

Of the 20 articles, 11 mention Clinton in various contexts, ranging from her participation in various Democratic campaigns to her attendance at presidential social engagements. Four of the total 20 focused on Clinton.¹²⁰ Finally, five of the total number of articles covering Clinton in the two month time frame around the conference focused on her efforts on behalf of child care and on the conference itself. Relative to the welfare reform bill, coverage of Clinton's involvement in the child care conference is

woman." Such a preface implies a need to qualify her policy activism and frame it as an extension of her other, more traditional roles.

notably extensive. Only three articles even mentioned Clinton's reaction to the welfare reform bill, each in two sentences or less.¹²¹ That five articles were devoted to exclusively covering Clinton and the conference illustrates the great visibility of her involvement. The coverage, however, is not excessive. During the one month period surrounding the congressional health care testimony a total of 11 articles focused on Clinton's involvement. Given the grand scale of the testimony, the historical precedent set, and Clinton's exhaustive involvement it is not surprise to find that the media extensively covered her congressional appearance. Justifiably somewhere in between the amount of coverage of the welfare bill and that of the congressional testimony, the child care conference attracted slightly over its fair share of coverage. That it received roughly half the attention that the testimony (a far more novel and news worthy event) did affirms the high level of interest in Clinton's re-entry into the policy arena.

Media's attentive coverage of the conference cannot solely be attributed to an interest in the rekindling of Clinton's policy-making role. Exactly six months prior to the child care conference, Clinton organized a similar event on a smaller scale. The Early Childhood Development Conference on April 17, 1997 hosted by Clinton received far less media coverage. Only two articles in the one month period around the conference

¹²⁰ Of the articles that focused on Clinton, two reported on her foreign travels, one on her birthday celebration, and one William Safire editorial on White House acronyms.

¹²¹ Certainly there is a large distinction to be made between something which she had no formal involvement in (i.e. welfare) and something that she initiated and organized (i.e. the conference). What media covers, however, is not necessarily directly indicative of the amount of involvement but more of public interest. Thus as one point of reference, the welfare bill coverage is useful in illustrating the degree to which the media covered Clinton's involvement in the conference.

mentioned it.¹²² Thus coverage is not only excited by Clinton's involvement, but also by the hype generated around the event.

The first article to address the child care conference does so with immediate notice of Clinton's return from a policy hiatus. In part, what makes the child care conference so intriguing was Clinton's active efforts to attract attention to it, simulating a grand entrance back onto the policy stage. Katharine Seelye begins coverage of the conference with her October 1 article, "Hillary Clinton Begins Drive to Improve Care for Children,"¹²³ observing Clinton's recent absence. "Largely absent from Washington's policy battles since national health insurance died in 1994, Hillary Rodham Clinton embarked today on a campaign to improve child care for working parents, particularly for people moving off welfare and into jobs." In her first lines, Seelye perpetuates the common narrative of Clinton retreating from public view following the failure of health care reform. Seelye cites a concern for working parents, particularly those tapering off of welfare, as the impetus for re-entry. Clinton's concerns, as presented by Seelye, cater both to her maternal position as First Lady and to her policy-maker desires to insure a proper implementation of the welfare reform bill.

The article also acknowledges Clinton's cognizant efforts to attract attention to the issue of child care and the conference. Describing Clinton's interactions with reporters on her way from Washington to Miami, Seelye observes:

This is only the second time in her five years as First Lady that Mrs. Clinton has brought national reporters with her on a domestic trip. Aides said that she hoped

¹²² A *Lexus Nexus* search of "Hillary and Clinton and Conference" produced two titles, one of which focused on the conference while the other made reference to it.

¹²³ Seelye, Katharine. "Hillary Clinton Begins Drive to Improve Care for Children." *New York Times*. October 1, 1997. P. A20.

to spark interest in a White House conference on child care planned for October 23 and that she planned more such trips with reporters in tow.

The article proposes that Clinton returns to the public eye, to excite interest in her conference, and further that she uses herself as a vehicle for soliciting visibility to the issue. Rather than influencing policy from behind the scenes, as she very well could have done, Clinton opted to exercise her influence out-rightly with the calculated intention of mobilizing interest in the cause.

Seelye proposes that such forthright advocacy and involvement are a way for Clinton to find a place for herself in her husband's administration and in history books.

Since her efforts at overhauling the nation's health care system failed two years ago, Mrs. Clinton has sought an issue with which to identify. As President Clinton has search for his own way to establish a legacy, so has Mrs. Clinton. . . Mrs. Clinton's aides said her attention to child care was a logical extension of her longtime work on behalf of children.

As Clinton tries to develop her own niche, she turns to issues of her past, where her professional experience and personal passions are the strongest. The portrait Seelye paints of Clinton is that of a First Lady appropriately concerned with challenges confronting the nation's children. In an effort to stimulate interest in the issue she deems important, Clinton relies on her most marketable commodity: herself. Through Seelye's portrait, Clinton is productively and successfully negotiating her own place in the White House and on the national political stage.

The next successive article to cover Clinton and child care, also written by Seelye, focuses on the toned-down approach Clinton assumes in her child care policy efforts. "First Lady is Low Key on Overhaul of Child Care" depicts Clinton's involvement as gradual and cautious policy formation, a sharp contrast with her past

approach to health care policy. The first line in the article immediately juxtaposes health care policy efforts with that of child care. "In a day packed with a half-dozen public events to promote good child care, Hillary Rodham Clinton demonstrated today that she had learned some lessons from the failure of her 1994 campaign to enact national health insurance."¹²⁴ Seelye frames her article such that analysis of child care efforts are compared to health care policy making. The article posits that Clinton approaches child care with the scars of health care still healing, cautious to evade similar pitfalls. Comparisons with health care reform abound, each highlighting the lessons learned from the disappointment of health care reform.

But there has been no splashy announcement, as there was when President Clinton pronounced his wife the most capable person to lead the health-care fight. . . . Rather, the First Lady has set out in a relatively low-key way to prove that she is not trying to usher in the kind of radical changes that her health-care critics accused her of. And she appears eager to signal that she has learned her lesson.

Seelye appears readily compliant with Clinton's desires to distance herself from the failures of health care, while opening a new chapter in her policy making endeavors. The article speaks to the success with which Clinton has convincingly learned her lessons and approached child care a more capable and cautious policy maker.

While the article was written before the conference, it seems to echo almost the exact sentiments of Clinton's conference speech.

"As part of her drive to change health care, Mrs. Clinton gathered a select group of experts, met in secret and emerged with one huge proposal to change the system from top to bottom. Now, with child care she is slowly gathering ideas in public events, asking questions and refraining from putting forth a big legislative agenda."

¹²⁴ Seelye, Katharine. "First Lady is Low Key on Overhaul of Child Care." *New York Times*. October 2, 1997. P. A13.

In Clinton's speech, she emphasize the all-inclusive element of policy formation --where the people who policy will effect are the people who most need to be involved. She also unambiguously declares the objectives of the conference, as a starting point of conversation, a precondition to policy formation. As Seelye's article illustrates, even before she directly states her intentions at the conference, Clinton's objectives are known. Both Clinton's self presentation and media coverage make it abundantly clear that child care is not another health care project, but an entirely refined undertaking.

In her second attempt at policy formation, Clinton chooses an issue far less controversial than health care and more congruous with her role as First Lady. Clinton's research for the child care issue can easily be mistaken for informal activities performed by a traditional First Lady. Seelye's article illustrates that Clinton's involvement with child care is a perfectly natural extension of her role as the First Lady. "In a colorful, toy-filled child care center, Mrs. Clinton chatted with children and joined them in stringing beads onto necklaces." This ideal combination of maternal and policy instincts is precisely the balance Clinton aims to achieve. As demonstrated in her speech to the conference, Clinton attempts to naturalize her role as policy-maker by adopting an issue appropriate for a traditional First Lady. The extent to which Clinton can portray her policy-making efforts as a natural extension of her concerns as First Lady determines the amount of controversy around and challenge to her role. Seelye reports Clinton comfortably playing with children casting Clinton, first and foremost, as a maternal First Lady and secondly as a policy generator, exactly the way Clinton strategically presents herself. The article presents Clinton in a role that prioritizes the First Ladyship while accommodating her policy making commitments, and does so without challenge. Even

though Clinton is clearly assuming a policy-influencing role, the article refrains from presenting the role in a negative or exceptional light, as was often done with health care coverage. The article casts Clinton's new undertaking in a positive, rather than controversial, perspective.

Not all coverage, however, is equally open-minded to the idea of child care policy and enthusiastic about Clinton's involvement with it. In his article "Child Care Talks Return First Lady to Spotlight," which appeared the day before the conference, Robert Pear approaches the conference from a much more distanced perspective:

Hillary Rodham Clinton convenes a White House conference on Thursday to highlight what she and the President see as an urgent need for safe, affordable child care. But conservative Republicans say they fear that the conference will lay the ground work for plans to increase Government spending or regulation.¹²⁵

Pear's article reports the conference from a very matter of fact stance. His concerns lie with policy and with politics, not necessarily Clinton herself. Calling attention to potential political opposition to the issue, Pear asserts that child care is not an "easy" or "feel good" issue, nor is it something everyone can necessarily agree on.

Pear takes child care out of the context of Clinton's re-entry to the policy making arena to explore the topic itself as a political issue. Pear approaches child care policy from a more critical perspective, yet he does so while reporting in conjunction with Clinton's self-presentation. Pear reports that Clinton "convenes" the conference, but that the issue is one that "she and the President see as an urgent need." The notion of Clinton as the instigator, and she and the President as a partnership acting on the issue perfectly mirrors the conference format itself. Throughout her speech, Clinton goes to extremes to

¹²⁵ Pear, Robert. "Child Care Talks Return First Lady to Spotlight." *New York Times*. October 22, 1997. P. A24.

insure that she is not interpreted as the policy-maker; it is the President who proposes policy, not Clinton. Even before the formal announcement, Pear's article accepts and reports this distinction made apparent previous to the formal conference announcement.

Pear also accurately reports on Clinton's objectives for the conference. After suggesting criticism of the Administration's involvement in child care, Pear justly reports Clinton's intentions for the conference and for potential policy. "The White House conference will probably generate several new policy initiatives, [Clinton] indicated, but they will not require enormous amounts of public money or a broadly expanded state regulatory role." Clearly, Clinton is aware of the fears harboring in opposition to government's increased role in child care and pre-empts them with the reassurance that child care policy will not be analogous to the major overhaul proposed by health care reform. By doing so, she simultaneously counters likely criticism and down plays her own role as policy maker. "Although Mrs. Clinton is the event's chief organizer, she took pains today to emphasize that any policy proposals would come from her husband, not from her. 'The President will make recommendations,' she said." As demonstrated by her conference speech, Pear's report of where the policy power lies accurately reflects how the Clintons presented the issue at the conference.

In addition, he refrains from citing Clinton as an individual actor, but rather as one part of a mutual partnership with her husband. "In their handling of this issue, the Clintons are clearly drawing on lessons learned from the health care debacle of the President's first term." Pear reports the controversy around health care reform and the comparison to child care, not by condemning Clinton's past actions, but by

acknowledging the lessons learned. As Pear reports, responsibility lies not solely with Clinton but also with the President and the Administration.

In concert with Seelye's articles, Pear also observes Clinton's re-emergence into the policy field following a post-health care hiatus.

Mrs. Clinton's work on the child care conference is her most visible effort at policy making since the failure of the health care project. The conference follows months of White House planning, aides said. It centers on an issue of long interest to Mrs. Clinton and was scheduled to capitalize on favorable publicity surrounding her 50th birthday on Sunday.

In reporting her re-entry, Pear also reports of Clinton's long time investment in the child care, a point she reiterated on multiple occasions.

Pear's article represents a more conservative view, in that he focuses on opposition to child care and fear of excessive government intervention, whereas more liberal reports make no mention of drawbacks of child care policy (Seelye's articles for example). His concern, however, lies exclusively with the policy itself, and not on Clinton's role. During the health care reform criticism, particularly that with conservative leanings, targeted Clinton's role, asserting that it was inappropriate, excessive, and even irresponsible. The novelty of Clinton's role as head of the task force combined with difficulty of reporting on the issue of health care itself proved a particularly engaging media topic. For various reasons, primarily the daunting size and difficulty of comprehension, the health care policy itself was rarely reviewed and when it was only in very general terms. Pear's article is exclusively concerned with policy and not the role that Clinton plays in it. Indeed the "spotlight" is on the policy and not Clinton herself. The media neglected to report policy in health care reform coverage, denying the public the possibility of judging Clinton based on her policy. In conference coverage, however,